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**Teacher Oral Feedback on Student Writing:  
An action research approach towards teacher-student  
conferences on EFL academic essay writing in a  
higher education context in Turkey**

**by**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this thesis:

AR:	Action Research
EAP:	English for Academic Purposes
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
IYTE:	Izmir Yüksek Teknoloji Enstitüsü
L1:	First Language
L2:	Second Language
MCA:	Mini-cycle of analysis
TD:	Teacher Knowledge
TK:	Teacher Development

**NB:** The capitalised 'Stage One' and 'Stage Two' are used in this thesis to indicate the two stages of conferencing carried out in this study. Where 'stage' appears all in lower-case, it is used to indicate each stage of the Burns (2005) framework for action research.

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**The appendices have been reduced to conform to Warwick University Graduate School Doctoral thesis submission guidelines regarding length. Should they be required by examiners, a complete version of the appendices may be obtained from Dr Sue Wharton, Centre for Applied Linguistics, Warwick University, UK.**

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## **Declaration**

The study outlined in this thesis is based on my own personal work which was carried out in IYTE between 2005 and 2010. Where possible I have provided names of those who also participated in the study. This thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

**This thesis consists of approximately 77,000 words,  
not including contents and appendices.**

## **Abstract**

Research on the effects of feedback on EFL writing is well documented (Ferris, 1997, Ferris 1999), although Hyland and Hyland (2006:186) state: 'Given how few studies have been carried out, little is known about the relationship between teacher and student discourse and teacher feedback in conferences and student revision'. The qualitative action research study outlined in this thesis addresses this imbalance. It concerns teacher-conferencing on academic essays written in a higher education context in Turkey. Based on a model of interrelated practices for action research suggested by Burns (2005), it investigates the relationship between discourse features of the conference and alterations made in follow-up drafts. Working with a constructivist approach to data, the study outlines how three Turkish teachers analysed transcripts of themselves conferencing in order to identify desirable features. Using such features, a second AR team repeated this procedure to notice firstly how far they had been able to implement these features, and secondly to further investigate the relationship between the conference and amendments to the follow-up draft. The study outlines practical action research and conferencing. It illustrates a refinement in analytical tools with which to identify successful features of conferencing, and shows how teachers may be producers of legitimate knowledge concerning features for classroom practitioners to assist with student-writing.

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## **Chapter One**

### **The context of this study**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks firstly at the role of English in Turkey, along with details concerning how English language teaching (ELT) takes place there. It next looks in more detail at ELT in Turkey in both secondary and higher education and in particular how writing in English is taught there. Following this is an outline of the institution in which the action research (AR) framework on which this thesis is based took place, along with details of how writing is assessed there. This chapter closes with a brief outline of the role of feedback on essay writing and student response in this context. Although several points below may appear anecdotal, they are based upon discussion with persons currently in positions of responsibility; locating specific documents and figures proved problematic.

##### **1.1.2 English in Turkey**

Turkey is an officially monolingual nation, one in which English is for the majority of people living there either a second language or, in the case of ethnic minorities such as Kurdish-speakers who use Turkish as a lingua franca, a third language. Dogancay-Aktuna (1998) has written on the difficulties involved in the planned and unplanned spread of English in Turkey, beginning with the first teaching of English in 1908, although this was to the children of ethnic minorities and usually in Protestant schools. She continues how it was not until 1924, a year after the foundation of the Republic of

Turkey, that a western foreign language was made a compulsory subject for all in schools.

In their article analysing the role and function of English in Turkey, Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe (2005:253) state that Turkey belongs to what Kachru (1986) refers to as the 'Expanding Circle,' where English has no official status but is increasingly used as a language of wider communication with other Europeans and the rest of the world. They point out how Hoffman's (2000) notion of 'achieved bilingualism' characterizes the Turkish situation, i.e. the bilingualism that exists is not naturally acquired and is found among only small groups of the population.

Summarising the role of English in Turkey, Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe (2005) state that '(it is) a code that symbolises modernisation and elitism to the educated middle-class and those in the upper strata of the socio-economic ladder. The most significant function of English in Turkey is its instrumental use as a foreign language within both public and private educational institutions that also act as agents of language spread. Although such language spread has been largely embraced by the majority, and greatly enhanced in recent years by cable and satellite TV and the internet, Dogancay-Aktuna (1998: 35) and Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe (2005: 258) hint at a developing situation within Expanding circle contexts, about which Mackay and Rubdy (2009: 23) state: '..the fear of the growing use of English is in sharp contrast to the prevalent belief that knowledge of English provides access to the global economy. It is this ambivalent attitude that fuels countries

to require the study of English while at the same time jealously protecting their own national language. The following sections outline the status of English in the Turkish national education system along with how this system reflects the status of English in Turkey.

## **1.2 ELT in Turkey: introduction**

Following on from the early beginnings referred to by Dogancay-Aktuna (1998) in 1.1.2, due to rapid spread that gained momentum in the 1980s, ELT became well established throughout Turkey in both state and private education. Traditionally, in each there tends to be a focus on teaching general purpose English using a structural approach. English is widely taught throughout Turkey, especially in the major urban areas of the four largest cities: Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana, and has for several years been a compulsory curriculum component, taught often in large classes from very early ages to late high school. English is by far the most popular second language studied in Turkey; others studied such as French and German come a distant and peripheral second.

### **1.2.1 EFL teachers in Turkey**

Large numbers of teachers are involved in ELT at various levels in Turkey, yet the ratio of learners to teachers continues to be high, especially as one moves eastwards where living standards tend to be lower than in major conurbations. Newly-qualified teachers in the state primary and secondary sector are employed by the Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) – the Turkish Ministry of Education. Those who wish to later choose where in Turkey they teach are

firstly obliged to undertake two years of what is known as ‘Doğu Hizmeti’, which translates approximately to compulsory ‘service in the east’, referring to three years employment in the less economically developed region in Turkey to the south and east of Ankara. Such service (also carried out by doctors in Turkey) may, however, also take place in similarly underdeveloped areas outside major towns or cities in any part of the country. Many teachers avoid such issues by choosing to work in the relatively better-paid private schools in the western half of Turkey.

### **1.2.2 English in secondary education**

Secondary education in Turkey lasts four years and consists of two types of high school: state and private. State schools may be further categorised as either Standard or Anatolian high schools. Standard high schools have no preparatory year of English but have instead eight periods per week of instruction in English. Anatolian high schools were founded in the late 1970s and are similar to private high schools in having a preparatory (prep) year of English and in using English as the medium of instruction. Anatolian high schools were opened to satisfy demands made by those parents who desired foreign language instruction for their children but who could not afford to pay private school fees. The vast majority of private schools in Turkey are English medium, although several others teach through German, French or Italian. Placement in both private and Anatolian high schools is based upon scores achieved in a nationwide exam known as the SBS, which is taken at the age of fourteen at the end of ‘İlk Öğretim’ (primary and middle school). Children from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds are often enrolled on

fee-paying courses in a 'dershane' (literally 'study-centre') whose function is to provide coaching for this exam.

Parents attach great importance to getting their children into either Anatolian or private high schools; this is regardless of the language used as the medium of instruction. The belief is that such education will help gain entry to more competitive university study and more prestigious employment positions. The Ministry of Education in Turkey stated that from 2005 onwards, as a means of applying standards set by the European Union to Turkish national education, a second foreign language would be a compulsory curriculum feature in both Anatolian and private high schools in Turkey. Informal discussion for the duration of this study with heads of department in local schools (2005-2010) indicated that this was currently predominantly German or French and consisted of between four to six lessons per week.

### **1.2.3 English in higher education**

Trotman (2009) outlines how, of the current total hundred and forty one universities in Turkey, all of the ninety-seven private and many of the forty-four state universities there are English medium. These each offer a year of intensive English preparation for students who do not pass the internal language proficiency exam. Several universities offer tuition in either English or Turkish. Some offer the possibility of study in English only in faculties such as medicine, which tend to contain students who have scored highly on the centralized university entrance exam. The suggestion would appear to be that such students do not require a year of prep English.

A new policy for higher education stated that from 2001-2002 compulsory foreign language education would be integrated into all Turkish medium universities. The policy did not directly stipulate the language taught, but, given the emphasis on English, the attitudes of the Ministry of Education towards English and the lack of teachers trained to teach other languages, it is currently generally English. English classes take place in the later semesters of four-year programmes and include reading and speaking classes along with exposure to relevant terminology so that learners are able to follow current research literature in their field.

### **1.3 Foreign language writing in Turkey**

In the later years of high school the focus for students of English in Turkey switches to preparation for the nationwide, grammar-oriented university entrance exam. Those intending to study language at higher education levels are encouraged to deal in these years with grammar listening intensive reading. During this period productive skills are not emphasised. This later leads to problems for many undergraduates who, on leaving school and wishing to study in faculties taught in English, become involved in the IYTE prep year where the productive skills of speaking and writing are emphasised and formally assessed.

#### **1.3.1 Responding to written work**

Although its value is widely acknowledged, responding to second language writing is also widely regarded as a time-consuming teacher activity. This is perhaps never more so than in the context of countries like Turkey where,

outside private colleges with their relatively smaller classes, the teaching load is heavy and tends to involve large groups. Responding to written work beyond sentence level and with extended teacher comments simply adds to this load. Informal discussion with teachers of writing in several high schools indicates that learners are rarely encouraged to write beyond sentence level in anything except guided tasks.

#### **1.4 İzmir Yüksek Teknoloji Enstitüsü (IYTE)**

Izmir Yüksek Teknoloji Enstitüsü, the institution in which this study was carried out, is a state university that was set up in 1992. It is one of only two in Turkey where the focus is on training scientists, engineers and architects. Students entering departments relating to these fields tend to be highly-motivated and have achieved higher than average scores on the nationwide YGS, the university entrance exam. The majority of lecturers in IYTE are Turkish staff holding Master's and in some cases Doctoral degrees from universities overseas, usually the USA. Teaching is carried out in English; ESP reading and writing are considered key skills as students are required to submit their Master's and Doctoral theses in English. The academic year at IYTE consists of two semesters, each of approximately sixteen weeks.

##### **1.4.1 Preparatory English at IYTE**

Prior to beginning studies within their chosen faculty, most students undertake the preparatory year of English. The beginning of year proficiency exam at IYTE functions also as a placement tool for the majority of students who, on not meeting the required standard to move directly to faculty studies, are

obliged to undergo an intensive academic year in a prep class. According to language ability students are placed in levels roughly equivalent to intermediate, lower-intermediate and beginner, which are labelled respectively as A, B and C levels. Level A follow a programme of twenty-one lessons per week; level B have twenty-four, and C have thirty. The dominant aspect of the week is main course English plus four lessons each of EAP writing, speaking and reading. By the end of the academic year students are expected to be at or around upper-intermediate level, which corresponds to IELTS band scores of 6.0 for each skill. Students not reaching this required standard are expected to undergo further study on an optional six-week summer school. Following this, those still not meeting the standard are obliged to re-take the proficiency / placement exam which, if they again 'fail', results in them repeating the prep year; something that is not uncommon. Of the 350-400 undergraduates who begin the preparatory year, approximately 60% pass. From the remaining 40% the majority are successful in the end of summer school exam. Approximately 10-12% of the original intake have to repeat the year. The AR study upon which this thesis is based was carried out with teachers and students involved in the IYTE prep year writing programme.

#### **1.4.2 Faculty English**

Following the prep year, students who have succeeded in the end of year exam continue their studies in their chosen faculty. The number of language lessons for all students decreases to three contact hours per week which runs for two academic years, during which the focus is on writing based upon reading. The writing skills taught in the IYTE prep department are assumed to



cover the basic requirements of faculty writing, although students continue their studies in English within departments of Architecture, Engineering and Science. Unlike many universities in Turkey, there is no writing centre at IYTE at which those with problems in writing can find support. It is vital, then, that such issues are dealt with in both the prep year and faculty years one and two.

### **1.4.3 Teachers of writing**

All language classes in the IYTE preparatory year receive instruction in writing on a weekly basis from a single teacher for four classroom periods of 45 minutes each. This total of three hours per week when multiplied by the total number of weeks in the academic year means students receive approximately 100 hours of formal tuition in writing. Although writing takes place within lesson time, often involving oral feedback that would be regarded as informal teacher-student conferencing, a large amount of writing also takes place outside the classroom. Informal discussion with faculty teachers of writing indicates that, following the prep year, less feedback on work is possible there due partly to the reduction in contact hours per week, and also to the fact that language teachers in faculties are not at hand for such assistance, being based in the Foreign Language Department.

### **1.4.4 Student writing**

Writing in the prep year at IYTE quickly assumes a degree of importance perhaps hitherto unheeded in the majority of high schools in Turkey. In order to move from sentence level work to paragraph writing, and then to EAP

essay writing within a matter of approximately 100 hours of tuition, students at IYTE are obliged to rapidly learn new skills and acquire a different understanding of what writing in an academic style involves.

#### **1.4.5 IYTE writing course content**

From 2007 teaching in semester one was based on 'Writing in Paragraphs' (Zemach and Islam: 2006). This was replaced by Academic Writing: From Paragraph to Essay (Zemach and Rumisek, 2005) From the second semester in 2010 teaching was based on the third edition of the IYTE writing course.

The writing course book taught at IYTE was originally based upon material produced by teacher-colleagues including myself, and at the start of this thesis it had been in use for one year. A second edition was produced for 2007-2008, the third year of this study. This was based on the original edition, but added to by documents used on the course in recent years. It takes learners from basic paragraph writing up to short, 120-150 word academic essay types. A third edition of this book was published in 2009. From this book, 'More than Words', classes are taught the following academic essay types, and in this order: process, problem-solution, advantages-disadvantages, compare-contrast, cause-effect and argumentative / opinion essays. This order was established by colleagues and myself at IYTE; it was considered as moving from the least to most difficult essay type.

#### **1.4.6 Writing policy**

A process approach towards teaching writing is the official but unwritten policy at IYTE. Traditionally, the expected response to both class and out of class student writing is error correction and teacher written commentary on each draft. Students are then required to rewrite work, paying attention to feedback provided. Along with writing, teachers involved with the IYTE preparatory year generally teach other skills; writing is not prioritised and is often viewed as unpopular and time consuming, especially with regard to reading and responding to students' work. Other possible reasons for reluctance concern the volume of marking. Informal observation, i.e. before the start of this study, had led me to believe teachers of writing felt they had to respond in detail to every error noticed. This indicated that less time-consuming and / or possibly more valuable methods of responding to writing such as minimal marking, peer response, teacher-taped commentary, and teacher-student conferencing were either unknown or were not currently implemented. Discussion in the research literature on such methods and their value appears in the following chapter, while opinions of teachers of writing at IYTE on these methods are outlined in chapter four following group and individual interviews.

#### **1.4.7 Assessment of writing**

Students are regularly assessed at IYTE. Monthly exams for levels A, B and C each contain a single but different writing question which all students are obliged to answer in essay format. The writing grade contributes 20% to the overall exam grade. Students are required to produce a single essay of between 120-150 words in an academic pattern recently taught on the course.

In previous years, prior to my taking on the role as coordinator of EAP writing at IYTE, students were offered a choice in writing exams from three possible questions and given what I personally felt was an over-long sixty minutes. However, arranging meetings, arriving at three suitable questions each month for each level and subsequently grading them accurately was found to be problematic. Teacher essay selection revealed weaknesses, while marker-generosity for certain questions led to what I personally felt was low inter-rater reliability. Based on my experience as an IELTS writing examiner I believed implementing a policy in which students at each level were obliged to answer the same single essay question would be more appropriate. After discussing this issue within the writing department the Director of Studies agreed to allow us to produce exams consisting of a single writing question for each level which would be answered in forty-five minutes instead of sixty.

It is also important to note that students are required to end the year with an average of 60% if they are to be allowed to take the final exam. Thus, a poor grade on the writing paper can seriously affect the overall average. In order to pass the final exam students have to score at least 70%. Poor scores on writing lower the possibility of achieving this. This issue leads students and teachers to adopt a serious approach to the writing course, and any feedback provided is given careful consideration.

#### **1.4.8 Portfolio assessment: introduction**

Apart from the above assessment system, IYTE also has a programme of fortnightly quizzes in each course component. Tests of reading, listening and

grammar are computer marked by clerical staff and thus require no effort on the part of teachers. As computers at IYTE cannot grade writing papers, teachers of writing who expend time and energy responding to essay-length writing find grading further writing quizzes adds to this burden. This was another reason for the implementation of writing portfolio assessment in which no further writing quizzes were necessary. The portfolio assessment system at IYTE is described below.

#### **1.4.9 Student portfolios**

On becoming IYTE coordinator of writing in 2003 I inherited a system in which students were required to collect all written work in a single file. This particular system did not require students or teachers to go beyond collecting a number of essays written throughout the academic year, which were awarded a single grade based on no available criteria. The system I suggested we implement, a means of alternative and more useful assessment, was based on Cushing-Weigle (2002:197-230). Trotman (2004) summarises portfolio assessment.

Students at IYTE are responsible for maintaining their portfolio in a suitably organised manner. This gathered work contains all drafts of essays, along with on-going learner-diaries (1.4.12). The concept implemented is based on the model of a cycle of collection, selection and reflection. Work gathered throughout the year is analysed by students who are asked to write two reflective essays each semester. Writing in a reflective manner and with guidance about their writing is felt by teachers of writing at IYTE to be a particularly useful activity in terms of getting students to engage in serious

reflection on their path towards improving their writing skills by way of providing self feedback.

#### **1.4.10 Teacher-feedback**

Individual pieces of writing collected from classes at IYTE are not formally graded. They are handed back with coded error corrections and teacher-comments that consist of praise for what is successful. Also provided are suggestions or criticisms that if read, comprehended and acted upon successfully should enable students to improve on key areas. Following informal discussion with colleagues also involved in teaching writing, I observed that the extent and detailed nature of correction and commentary in the IYTE writing unit had been largely unexamined and therefore provided a potential research space for pursuing my own investigation in this area. As it appeared that variations on the use of forms of feedback other than error correction and teacher commentary had not been implemented at IYTE, this was my starting point. The investigative study in chapter four of this thesis looks in greater depth at feedback practices as they were at the start of this study.

#### **1.4.11 Cover sheets**

A student-feedback related aspect of the portfolio system explained in 1.4.9 is the cover sheet. On this sheet teachers enter global comments concerning general matters such as the way the student is working, or on features detected for the student to work on. Comment types include praise, encouragement and criticism. Students are also offered the opportunity to

respond to such feedback with their own thoughts and opinions. This rarely exceeds a brief comment, but occasionally provides insights and provokes questions related to student writing.

#### **1.4.12 Learner-diaries**

Another aspect of the student portfolio at IYTE that provides opportunities for student response is the learner-diary in which students are encouraged to record language learning experiences. Such diaries may be added to at any time. It is explained that no-one else apart from the current teacher of writing may access the diary. It is also explained that the purpose of the diary is to enable students to explore their own thoughts and extend their writing by way of this additional opportunity. The aim is to make this an interactive feature; teachers feed back on points raised in the diary. It is perhaps worth noting that students tend to provide personal information. This latter point is important in the context of this study as it reflects the confidence learners appear to have in the teacher's professional and emotional support, while it also demonstrates a belief in teacher integrity. Student writers without such belief may place less trust in teacher-feedback on their work and as a consequence may see little benefit in using any provided. Respecting the rights of students to privacy, learner-diaries were not used in this study as a source of data.

#### **1.4.13 Student-response**

At IYTE and elsewhere students are keen to see where their writing has and has not been successful. The request for students at IYTE to rewrite work is

rarely met with resistance, even with writers at lower levels who are asked on occasion to produce a third or fourth follow-up draft. At the outset of this study it appeared that students' attitudes and beliefs about the benefits gained by such rewriting or the effect of the teacher's comments on their attitude and performance had not been closely scrutinised or taken into consideration. Rewriting appeared to take place because it seemed the correct pedagogical path to pursue.

## **1.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has outlined the context within which the eventual action research study which forms the basis of this thesis was carried out. It has described the spread of English in Turkey, the role of ELT in secondary and higher education in Turkey, and looked at writing and methods of feedback on writing that tend to be carried out in the prep year at IYTE. The potential for research into feedback provision in the IYTE writing unit seemed at this point to be clear: an investigative study involving current teachers and students would, I envisaged, more fully reveal feedback methods implemented and attitudes towards them, and help to locate methods such as conferencing that were either little used or not at the time in use, but might usefully be adopted.

## **1.6 Summary of this thesis**

This thesis is a qualitative action research (AR) study into oral feedback on EAP writing at university level in Turkey. Chapter one outlines the context for the study. The research approach was based on the framework for AR suggested by Burns (2005). Chapter two reviews literature on feedback on



writing, and looks closely at a less researched method, that of conferencing. Chapter three compares four paradigms available to the qualitative researcher. The investigative study in Chapter four functions as Burns (2005) stages of exploring and identifying. It describes research instruments used, in particular interviewing, then explains the outcome and implications of group and individual interviews with teachers of EAP writing at Izmir Yüksek Teknoloji Enstitüsü (IYTE). Chapter five explains issues relating to AR and describes the planning and data collection stages of Burns (2005). Chapter six involves the analysis of transcripts of three teachers of writing at IYTE who carried out Stage One conferences. Chapter seven consists of further analysis of this data, along with an outline of later stages of Burns (2005) which concern speculating in order to establish how to proceed with Stage Two conferencing. Chapter eight outlines Stage Two conferences, in which a newly-formed AR team intervened to carry out further conferencing. This was to observe the effect on students' writing of implementing conferencing procedures arising from analysis of Stage One conferencing data. Chapter nine analyses what happened during the intervention, and observes firstly how features of conferencing noted as desirable and undesirable were implemented then, as in chapters ten to twelve, outlines further analysis of the relationship between conferences and the revision process, noting mini-cycles of analysis (MCAs) within the overall analysis. The final chapter discusses findings. This research therefore involves implementing the framework for AR suggested by Burns (2005), observing how teacher development may occur. By doing so it seeks both to locate and implement desirable features of conferencing and identify the relationship between these features and alterations on follow-up drafts.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature review: Feedback on L2 writing**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter one explained the context in which the study was carried out. The current chapter reviews literature concerning feedback on writing, and in particular looks at work carried out on teacher-student oral conferencing (henceforth 'conferencing'). This chapter reviews literature in five sections. The first (2.2.1- 2.2.3) outlines global issues involved in teaching EFL writing, while the second (2.3.3-2.3.11) concerns the provision of feedback in various forms on such EFL writing, along with related issues. Following this is a third section (2.4.1) that looks in detail at one particular feedback method, that of conferencing. 2.4.6-2.4.8 look more specifically at studies involving an analysis of the discourse taking place within conferencing. Literature concerning action research appears in later chapters, more specifically in 3.11 to 3.11.6.

#### **2.2.1 A conceptual overview of writing**

Although there are other conceptual overviews of writing, due to space limitations this study looks at that by Hyland (2002). Hyland (2002:5-48) identifies three main approaches to analysing writing. The first focuses on the products of writing and examines texts according to their formal surface elements or their discourse structures. The second approach Hyland (ibid) divides into the Expressivist, Cognitivist and Situated strands. In this approach the focus is on the writer; writing is described in terms of the processes used

to create the texts. The third approach emphasises the role of the reader and how writers engage with an audience while creating texts. While the latter is also of concern, it is the first of these three groups that more directly concerns this study on feedback. Thus it is necessary to look in more detail at this approach which focuses on the tangible, analysable aspects of writing by viewing writing as textual products. The following sections look firstly at the view of texts as autonomous objects and next as text as discourse.

### **2.2.2 Texts as autonomous objects**

Hyland (2002) explains how this model views writing as a product, a 'coherent arrangement of elements structured according to a system of rules'. It is based on ideas inherited from Structuralism and implicit in Chomsky's transformational grammar. Writing is seen as an autonomous mechanism that depends less on particular writers or readers, and more on setting out ideas using correct forms. In this model writing is seen as 'langue', a demonstration of the writer's knowledge of forms and an awareness of the system of rules used to create a text. Such accuracy is viewed as an appropriate objective of the writing classroom. The response of teachers to writing according to this perspective is a tendency to focus on error correction and indicating problems students may have over their control of the language system. This view of texts as objects for analysis is reflected in comments made by teachers in chapter four, the investigative study, during both group and individual interviews. It is also reflected in the assessment format at IYTE which consists of direct assessment of writing based largely on the format in the

current IELTS writing paper, which asks candidates to write a 120-150 word response to a single question.

### **2.2.3 Texts as discourse**

In contrast to the view in 2.2.2 that suggests writing may be analysed independently of context and use, the perspective of texts as discourse looks beyond surface structures and sees writing as an attempt to communicate with an audience. Many approaches have considered text as discourse, but one of the earliest and most important was the Prague school which looked into the ways in which clauses are structured into given and new information. This is further elaborated in the work of Halliday and other systemic linguists in the concept of theme and rheme structure. A different strand has focused on identifying the rhetorical functions of discourse units, examining what pieces of texts are trying to do and how they fit into larger structures. Most notable are the Clause Relation perspectives of Winter (1977) and Hoey (1983 and 2001), and patterns such as problem-solution, hypothetical-real and general-particular.

Studies concerning methods of feedback described below relate to both views described above on the nature of text. Some, such as error correction, analyse text more in relation to its being an autonomous object, while others such as teacher commentary tend to provide feedback at discourse level. Others such as conferencing concern work at both levels.

### **2.3 The role of feedback in approaches to teaching writing**

With regard to feedback on the product of L2 writing, investigations into its effectiveness have flourished in recent years, although conclusions surrounding feedback types and their degrees of effectiveness in terms of improvements in writing on the whole tend to vary or conflict. Although the principal orientations towards L2 writing may be combined in most classroom contexts, only in the expressivist and process approach does there appear to be a pedagogical concern for multiple drafting and revision based on feedback. Whereas the genre orientation tends to be product based, and intervention is not normally a requirement, this is often contrasted with the process approach, particularly in the view by Atkinson (2003b) who argues for a degree of intervention and feedback at key points in the writing process and when dealing with the final product. However, as a central role in most eclectic orientations of the L2 writing teacher cited in Hyland (2003), the provision of feedback is regarded as vital.

Hyland and Hyland (2006:83) point out how in the process approach feedback is viewed as a developmental tool that enables the movement of learners through multiple drafts towards effective expression. They add that, from the interactionist perspective, feedback is an important means of establishing reader response in shaping meaning. They continue that in genre classrooms feedback is a key element of the scaffolding necessary to enable writers to gain the literary resources that enable them to participate in target communities. Hyland and Hyland (2006) also point out that, due to insights gained over the past twenty years concerning writing pedagogy, feedback

practices have been transformed to the extent that teacher commentary may be combined with other forms, such as peer response or oral conferences. Another feature Hyland and Hyland (2006:83) explain is how: 'summative feedback, focusing on writing as a product, has generally been replaced or supplemented by formative feedback which points forward to the student's future writing and the development of his or her writing processes Hyland and Hyland (ibid) conclude by pointing out that in spite of feedback being a central component in writing programmes around the world, '...the research literature has not been unequivocally positive about its role in writing development, and teachers often have a sense that they are not making use of its full potential As the writing approach at IYTE was theoretically a process approach but in practice based more on eclectic thought, feedback was a central aspect of the writing course there. As mentioned in 1.5, in order for the feedback provision to be improved at IYTE I believed a study into types currently being implemented and discussed in the literature would be a suitable research starting-point. This study is fully documented in chapter four of this thesis.

### **2.3.1 Feedback methods: introduction**

The following sections look at types of feedback and at the debates over related research in this area. These types, along with my critical analysis of them, are dealt with in the following order: error-correction, teacher-commentary, feedback channels, the role of praise, peer response, teacher-taped commentary, self-evaluation, computer feedback and finally conferencing. Ending this section is a summary of feedback types that this study considered.

### **2.3.2 The importance of feedback**

However time-consuming feedback provision may be for teachers, it is generally agreed to be helpful towards developing writing skills. Learners tend to view feedback as desirable, even crucial, and value it as a means of assistance. Offering further support to the provision of feedback, Goldstein (2004) explains how writers need to learn that words on a page are not static and that meaning resides in them. Such a state, she argues, can only be achieved by concerned readers, generally teachers or peers, who are qualified to provide effective feedback.

### **2.3.3 Error correction**

The most commonly applied form of feedback given by teachers is perhaps their indication of written errors at surface level, and a good deal of research has focused on this area. This section provides a necessarily brief account of a vast area as the debate on the impact of error correction has a long history. Stiff (1967) for example, looked at the effect upon student composition of particular correction techniques, while Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986) looked at the salience of feedback on error quality and the effect of this on EFL writing.

More recently, among the most referred to is that by Ferris (1999) and in particular her debate with Truscott (1996) over his findings concerning the value of correction to the development of L2 writing skills. This debate was initiated by Truscott (1996) who, having carried out a meta-analysis of research on the effectiveness of grammar correction, argues from an EFL

perspective that while grammatical accuracy is important, grammar correction of L2 writing should be abandoned because research has shown it to be ineffective and possibly harmful, as an inordinate amount of time may be taken up on correction at the expense of actual writing. The response by Ferris (1999) argued that Truscott's conclusions were premature and too strong. Ferris, though, cites evidence for effective error correction 'that would be selective, prioritised and clear' and is critical of Truscott's research design. Using insights from Truscott's work, Ferris (1999) suggests lines of research that would lead to more informed debate.

Responding to Truscott (1996), along with the response to this by Ferris (1999), Bitchener and Knoch (2008: 204) point out how investigations into the most effective methods of providing written corrective feedback have been overly comprehensive, and how in contrast '...oral corrective feedback studies have produced clear positive results from studies that have targeted particular error categories. They then go on to outline how their study, which targeted only two functional error categories with teacher written comments, proved effective.

Criticism of error correction also comes in Lee (2003) which, also dealing with work on sentence-level accuracy, reports on how teachers in her study who marked texts comprehensively were not convinced the effort required by the correction process achieved desirable results in terms of student improvement in composing skills. Minimal marking with the use of correction codes is felt to make correction less threatening. One disadvantage of such an approach is



ambiguity of error categorisation. Too many categories of error tend to confuse writers, so a truly minimalist approach may be best. Of particular concern in relation to sentence level feedback are doubts about the effectiveness of selective / minimal marking, based on correction codes. Such codes are often assumed to be helpful, yet teachers find classification and categorisation of error difficult, while students tend not to fully comprehend the teacher's intended help.

Another critical analysis of error-correction and written comments appears in Lee (2008: 13) who explains how 'The majority of feedback studies address the act of teacher feedback *per se*, and not much is known about teachers' beliefs and the extent to which these beliefs translate into practice She goes on to list ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written feedback practices. Lee (2008: 18) concludes that while teachers tend to attribute their practices to various constraints, such as values, '...it is not certain whether these are real explanations for the mismatches or mere excuses that teachers use to justify their practices Whereas Lee (2008) looks at beliefs versus practice, this thesis outlines how what teachers said during conferences, along with error-correction and teacher written feedback, affected alterations made in follow-up drafts. Concerning Lee's (seventh) point which explains how 'teachers' written feedback practice allows students little room to take control although teachers think students should learn to take greater responsibility for their learning, I feel this thesis illustrates how conferencing enables student control to take place via negotiation.

Further criticism of the effect of error-correction is evident in Truscott and Hsu (2008: abstract) who explain how 'previous research has shown that corrective feedback on an assignment helps learners reduce their errors on that assignment during the revision process,' but ask if this is evidence that learning resulted from the feedback. Their study suggested that 'successful error reduction during revision is not a predictor of learning' and that 'Improvements made during revision are not evidence on the effectiveness of correction for improving learners' writing ability Criticism of Truscott and Hsu (2008) by Chandler (2009) was followed up by Truscott (2009).

#### **2.3.4 Teacher commentary**

Relating to a process approach, although attention did not really turn to the area of teacher feedback until the late 1980s, with articles by Zamel (1985) and Radecki and Swales (1988), of increasing concern more recently are two specific research issues: whether writers of ESL/EFL are able to respond effectively and make use of feedback provided by editing, revising and improving current and future texts, and whether one type of feedback may be more effective in improvements in writing skills than another. Although Hyland (2003:177) has pointed out that formative feedback offers the learner individualised attention that is rarely possible in normal classroom conditions, others such as Goldstein (2004: 64), have questioned the value of this attention and indicated noticeable gaps in the research, stating: 'Many questions and issues underlie the processes of reading student papers and providing effective commentary, and of reading teacher commentary and revising successfully Goldstein (2004:65) adds: 'Many areas inherent in

commentary have yet to be addressed or adequately addressed in the research literature

Beyond the level described in 2.3.3 in which teachers feed back on the mechanics of the writing process at sentence level using correction codes, Ferris, in Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), has also described how global marking in the form of teacher commentary may be more valuable to learners and teachers. Also beyond sentence-level, and dealing with issues of text content, organisation and rhetorical devices, Hyland (2003) outlines research both in support of and criticising the value to the L2 writer of teacher written commentary. He comments on the value of alternatives such as teacher-learner conferencing and peer feedback. Hyland (2003) adds that '(while) there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of oral feedback, there is less certainty over who should respond to L2 writing, and the use of peer and teacher feedback has a central role to play in the form feedback should take

Hyland (2003) explains that when responding to errors, teacher written feedback should respond to all aspects of students' texts, but not every aspect at every stage, and that it should occur during what Hyland terms 'the joint construction of the text'. Teachers should address text features associated with the genre in question. Concerning the purposes and forms of written feedback, Reid (1993) distinguishes between responses that are either descriptive, personal or evaluative, while Ferris (1997) has identified eight broad functions of response, including asking for unknown information and giving information on ideas. Bates et al (1993) suggest ways to achieve the

purpose of providing feedback on a text in progress: write personalised comments; provide guidance where necessary; make text-specific comments, and balance positive and negative comments. Writing about student preferences and their uses of feedback, Hyland (1998) points out how L2 writers value feedback as a whole, while the work of Leki (1990) shows more specifically that student writers prefer feedback on their grammar.

#### **2.3.4.1 Teacher commentary channels**

Channels of teacher feedback on student writing include cover sheets that may concern minimal marking, taped comments and electronic feedback. Perhaps the most common channel is the form of the teacher responding as reader rather than evaluator. Such a response may be placed both within the margin of the text, at the end of the text or both. Marginal comments may be the best format as this is felt to be more immediate and proximate. Rubrics are often used for final drafts; these are often cover sheets containing a checklist of criteria required of the writer along with those achieved. Another channel for teacher commentary, dealt with more fully in 2.3.9, is that of a taped format, which saves time, adds novelty and provides listening practice for students whilst also assisting those with auditory learning style preferences.

#### **2.3.5 Content in teacher commentary**

A good deal of work has also been carried out on comments made on students' scripts. In particular Ferris (1997), and Hyland and Hyland (2001) point out how although there have been a number of models suggested for

classifying teacher comments, many have focused on contrasting large-scale areas such as content versus form, but have not addressed the teachers' aims. Hyland and Hyland (2001) focuses on this and on the amounts, functions and effects of praise, criticism and suggestion appearing in L2 writing. In this work, which dealt with only end of text comments, the authors point out how the most frequently used category was praise, but add that this was often used to soften criticisms and suggestions rather than when simply responding to good work. They point out that significant prior research on praise and criticism in feedback is fairly sparse. This thesis looks more closely at both praise and criticism in chapter six.

Hyland and Hyland (2001) point out that one feature which may influence patterns of praise and criticism in written feedback is teacher response style, which they categorise as either dualistic, relativistic or reflective. Results of the analysis of 51 student essays and 495 feedback points produced by the two teachers in their research showed 44% of points were in the form of praise, 31% criticism and 25% suggestions. The authors point out how these findings contradict work which claims positive comments are rare in feedback, e.g. that of Connors and Lunford (1993). Hyland (2003) states that providing too much praise early on in the writing cycle may lead to complacency and discourage revision, and thus praise is best reserved for the final draft. In the latter case feedback may be categorised as primarily a pedagogical tool. Specific research questions that clearly require investigation concern the extent to which praise is effective in assisting the development of student

writing and, if it is effective, at what stage it is likely to be most effective in this development.

Other points made by Hyland (2003) are on the importance of not overwhelming the student writer with criticism. There needs to be a balance between being realistic in pointing out errors and being encouraging. A continuum exists ranging from suggestion to criticism. 'Summary comments help communicate concepts and principles that students can make use of in subsequent assignments'. Goldstein (2004:73-74) has also commented on the value of praise in teacher commentary. She points out how although it reinforces for writers their own idea about what they are succeeding in doing and at the same time helps build confidence, it should be deserved rather than gratuitous.

### **2.3.6 Peer response**

Lin and Hansen (2002) point out how peer response finds support in the theoretical stances of process writing, collaborative learning, Vygotskian learning theory and interactionist theories of L2 acquisition. Theoretical advantages of peer feedback are based on the fact that writing and learning are social processes in which active participation in learning is assisted by multiple readers in a non-threatening situation.

Peer response is typically done in groups of two to four student writers who exchange papers during class time. Peers comment and students respond to the comments; both in writing. It is normally the case that students provide

copies for each group member to read and review. Peer response may take place online and in this regard 2.3.11 provides a more detailed account of the role of computers and feedback. The concept of peer feedback (also termed 'collaborative talk', 'peer response' and peer editing) developed from L1 process classes and provides an important alternative to teacher-based forms of response. Peer feedback activities have become common in ESL contexts, especially at tertiary level.

Activities involving peer feedback enable students to negotiate intended meaning in an unthreatening atmosphere concerning content and rhetorical concerns, and enable linguistic knowledge not available to the writer to be supplied by a peer reader. O'Brien (2004) reports work by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) with English speaking students writing in French and involving two groups: one with only teacher feedback, the other using oral / aural peer feedback. One of the important findings was that the peer oral revision group performed on a level equal to that of the control group.

### **2.3.7 Criticisms of peer response**

Hyland (2003) points out that benefits of peer feedback have been hard to confirm empirically. Criticisms of peer response include claims over its effectiveness in improving writing skills and that any benefits it may contain have yet to be proven. Other criticisms of peer response include concerns about cultural and social differences between members of response groups, while a more common criticism is the belief that students are not capable of detecting and correcting errors in L2 writing. Such criticisms have led to

studies comparing teacher commentary and peer feedback. A further criticism of peer response is the feeling that since learners are rhetorically inexperienced they may only focus on surface level features rather than on ideas and organisation. Leki (1990) points out how their comments may be vague, unhelpful, sarcastic or over-critical and that collectivist cultures may only emphasise having a positive group climate at the expense of any helpful critical comments. Leki (1990) also notes how students are often ambivalent about the quality of peers' suggestions and tend to prefer teacher feedback.

### **2.3.8 Complementary roles of teacher and peer response**

Combinations of feedback are becoming increasingly popular in research. O'Brien (2004) points out how early assumptions that one type of feedback might be more effective than others was replaced by the acknowledgement that each type served different purposes. Zhang (1995) reported how, when tertiary ESL students were offered the choice of either teacher feedback or peer or self-directed feedback, the majority stated a preference for teacher feedback. Zhang (1995) and Jacobs, Curtis, Brain and Huang (1998) concluded that the two types of feedback play complementary roles. Work by Jacobs et al (1997) is supported by that of Tsui and Ng (2000) who concluded that students are able to benefit from peer review procedures. There appear to be good reasons for believing peer feedback can be an effective means of improving students' writing, although there are several uncertainties as to which form is the most effective.



The investigative study of this thesis in chapter four indicated that issues such as the above may have had a negative impact and eventually led teachers in my current teaching context to either fail to implement or abandon feedback via peer response. This was a further reason I felt research involving conferencing would be of both more pedagogical and research value. While it was clear that peer response was a well-researched area, not only did it appear to take a good deal of setting up, but I also believed it might be more practical and beneficial for my own teaching context to invite participation from teachers who would remain with the writing unit and be more capable of providing feedback in future years, rather than train students who would the following year be pursuing their studies in a variety of faculties, and would provide no sustainable pedagogical benefits to the IYTE writing unit.

### **2.3.9 Teacher-taped commentary**

A further method of providing feedback on students' written work is via teacher-taped commentary (TTC). In this method, as the teacher reads through students' work she tapes comments which the student is able to listen to later. A study carried out by Hedge (2007) implemented this feedback method. Working with sixteen teachers on an AR project in the UK Hedge notes that TTC as a feedback strategy appears to have been less researched than other methods such as peer-conferencing and reformulation. She explains how during TTC the teacher is able to respond to the writing as a whole piece of discourse and how the response becomes a dialogue between teacher and writer. In support of TTC she explains how teacher workloads made it difficult for her to hold individual writing conferences and how taped

commentary had the potential as a more flexible form of feedback that could be carried out during the tutor's quieter periods. In her study essays were marked with numbers in the margin of the script where the tutor had provided comments. Taped commentary on each point was given to the writer to listen to, along with a feedback sheet containing a written summary plus an invitation to the writer to respond either on the tape or on the sheet. The teachers in the study were asked their opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of TTC compared with the traditional methods of tutor written comments. The most mentioned point concerning the writing was the amount of detailed spoken feedback that could be provided compared with the written form, with writers commenting on the personal attention they believed they were receiving. After reflecting on our own study, I believe that offering students concerned a copy of the recorded oral conference may have been beneficial, although this would require the permission of teachers concerned.

I took the research decision that meant while I felt it was possible to further investigate this little researched area of conferencing in my teaching context, I also felt that firstly the technological requirements for both teacher and students added to the logistics involved, and that there was no necessity to tape commentary as writer and teacher availability for conferencing was not at first an issue.

### **2.3.10 Self-evaluation**

Teachers of writing would certainly admit that moving learners towards a state in which they are capable of critically evaluating their own work is the ultimate

pedagogical aim. In this regard Hyland and Hyland (2006:92) state. 'It is therefore important not to overlook the writers themselves as critical readers and reviewers of their own texts Little work appears to have been carried out in relation to self-evaluation in the L2 writing context, although work carried out by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) involved procedural facilitation techniques to enable the development of learners' revision strategies.

A key problem involved in self-evaluation is the difficulty of learners reading their own work with anything more than the minimal critical detachment that an outside reader would be expected to bring. Another issue is that although strategy instruction and prompt techniques may be taught, they may, as Peck (1990) found, be fairly ineffective due to variation in writers' contexts and goals. Self-evaluation may be more effective when used in relation to computer-assisted packages and prompts. The following section looks at this area.

### **2.3.11 Computer-mediated feedback**

With recent developments in technology there is more of a likelihood, especially in relation to distance learning, that learners will receive feedback electronically from both their peers and teachers. Three specific areas of computer-mediated feedback may be discerned: computer conferencing, automated feedback and corpora-based feedback. Each of these are dealt with below.

#### **2.3.11.1 Computer conferencing**

Using discussion software, feedback on writing during computer conferencing may occur either synchronously, i.e. in real time, or delayed, asynchronously. Although claims have been made that such facilities empower the learner and add a social dimension to learning, there are also critics of such a method. These are due largely to learners' inability to cope suitably with technology.

#### **2.3.11.2 Automated computer feedback**

Automated computer feedback has the potential advantage of taking away a large amount of time-consuming work normally carried out by the teacher, but currently it is still most widely used by international language testing organisations that seek to provide only summative feedback on limited aspects of writing performance. Critics such as Burstein and Marcu (2003) suggest that feedback of this type should only be used to supplement classroom language instruction rather than replace it.

#### **2.3.11.3 Corpora and concordancing tools**

By accessing language corpora and using concordancing tools, student writers are able to make use of the computer as a tool instead of a machine with only pre-programmed CALL facilities. Hyland and Hyland (2006) report how the use of corpora is becoming increasingly important in L2 writing, especially now that this involves less information parting by the teacher and more provision of self-learning opportunities. Preliminary evidence from studies by both Todd (2001) on learner self-correction, and Gaskell and Cobb (2004) on learner correction plus teacher-help with concordance links,

indicates benefits of the use of corpora. Perhaps the most important effect of the use of corpora concerns how, by allowing writers to make their own decisions on text-revision, it relieves the student of the need to accept teacher-editing. It remains questionable, however, as to whether such decision-making can ever completely replace the teacher.

## **2.4 Teacher-student conferencing: introduction**

In their closing remarks outlining indications for future research on feedback, Hyland and Hyland (2006:96) outline how ‘...the research on oral feedback in writing is still quite limited and the effects of oral response on revision and longer-term writing improvements have not been fully investigated. They add how, although both teachers and students tend to be positive on the use of conferencing, there is still much to discover in this area, in particular with regard to the guidance required by teachers to provide confident planning and interaction. In view of these comments, and as it appeared to be a potential research area to explore, I felt it was necessary to look in greater depth at the idea of conferencing.

The following section outlines the advantages, along with some drawbacks, that the literature points to concerning what is possibly the most interactive method of feedback, that of conferencing. Having used this method informally on many occasions in my own teaching, and although I believe it to be an extremely valuable method, it is not without criticisms, some of which are explained in 2.4.3. 2.4.5 outlines an account of a recent study that pointed to the value of conferencing for improving the accuracy of writing carried out by

adult learners. This study involved, however, a combination of feedback methods. More specifically, this review looks in 2.4.6 and 2.4.7 at the discourse arising from conferencing, and how various units of this discourse related to writer improvement on subsequent drafts. As chapter six of this thesis shows, such units of discourse became a central aspect of this study, while chapters nine to twelve illustrate how discourse features appeared to be related to revisions in follow-up drafts.

### **2.4.1 Benefits of conferencing**

The literature on the whole points to many benefits of conferencing, although several would appear to be unsubstantiated. One key advantage of this method is its ability to supplement possible limitations of one-way written feedback, as it provides opportunities for teacher-student negotiation of meaning. The interactive nature of conferencing allows the teacher to respond to cultural and other needs by clarifying meaning and resolving ambiguity. It saves teachers time on detailed marking and is good for learners with auditory learning preferences. It also allows students to ask questions that may not easily be formulated in front of peers in the classroom. Hyland (2003) points out how research suggests students typically receive more focused and usable comments during conferencing than via written feedback. He adds, however, that the literature stresses the need for careful planning and suggests conferencing requires active student participation for it to lead to a positive lasting effect on students' writing. The latter point is dealt with in detail in 2.4.7, while chapter twelve concerning a conference between Ece and

Alpay illustrates an example of the difficulty of conferencing with a student who is unprepared.

### **2.4.2 Criticisms of conferencing**

Although the benefits of conferencing perhaps appear clear, this feedback method is not without its critics. Goldstein and Conrad (1990), for example, question the value of conferencing due to student inhibitions. While saving time on detailed marking it is still very time-consuming and, unlike teacher-taped commentary, requires both students and teachers to be available at the same time. It also requires interaction skills that teachers may not have, and student and teacher expectations of conferencing may be mismatched. Other issues concern the learners' ability levels and, unless the teacher has access to the students' first language, it may be problematic when dealing with elementary level learners. With regard to the latter point, 11.8 discusses the use of the L1, while 11.8.4 in particular illustrates four examples of the benefits of using the L1 during conferencing.

### **2.4.3 Conducting conferences**

While Schiff (1982) lists several types of conference, Hyland (2002) describes conferencing as involving short or longer face-to-face meetings either with both the teacher and individuals or small groups in the classroom, or more formally with individuals or groups away from the classroom and in quiet areas. He adds how possible topics might include drafts of writing in progress or completed ones, or writing strategies. He continues that it may be carried out on an ad hoc basis both outside of and within lessons and may be an

optional extra or a compulsory feature of the course. Hyland (2002) also suggests conference endings should always offer something for students to address in their work, or an achievable course of action for improvement. Hyland (2003) recommends addressing salient issues in students' work and cautions teachers against being overly directive. Other points include a need to support students' writing rather than editing it, encouraging students to initiate issues, and ending conferences with an explicit plan for action. White and Arndt (1991:97) suggest procedures for conducting a conference and note that conferencing sessions should end with praise and encouragement. Hyland (2003) explains that students need to be made accountable for following up the discussion with a task to show the teacher feedback has been taken seriously. This may consist of a journal entry or a letter informing the teacher of the uses the feedback has been put to, along with which parts the student found useful.

#### **2.4.4 Combining feedback types**

Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2006) looked at the effect of two different types of corrective feedback and investigated whether over a twelve week period the provision of such feedback affected the improvement in the written accuracy of fifty-three adult students on three types of written error: prepositions, the simple past tense and the definite article. The study compared two groups of students. One group received only teacher corrective feedback, the other received corrective feedback along with five-minute individual conferences. Among the findings of the study were that when individual conferencing combined with corrective feedback was provided, this



resulted in improved accuracy in the areas of the use of the simple past tense and the definite article. The data also revealed that when the three error categories were considered as a single group, no overall effect on accuracy was shown. Such studies involving a combination of conferencing and another feedback style have tended to be fairly inconclusive, and provided me with a further reason for focusing solely in this study on the conference and feedback.

#### **2.4.5 A research space**

Bearing in mind the above, the implementation of conferencing at IYTE appeared intuitively attractive but, on reviewing the literature further, I agreed at this point with Hyland (2003) and Ferris (in Kroll, 2003) that empirical research appeared to be limited. As a result of the investigative study outlined in chapter four, I further felt a continued AR approach towards looking at teachers in IYTE conferencing, and an analysis of the resulting transcripts and draft two revisions, would address the need for empirical data to support the research literature relating to the value of this method of feedback. Chapters six, and chapters nine to twelve illustrate points arising from conferencing data, seeking to identify possible relationships between discourse features noted and alterations in follow-up drafts. In relation to this, the following section deals with a specific aspect of conferencing and reviews studies concerning the analysis of discourse arising, especially with regard to alterations made during the revision process.

#### **2.4.6 The discourse of conferencing**

A particular area of conferencing receiving relatively little attention, at least until 1990, was the analysis of discourse arising in conferences between teachers and L2 student writers. One of the most referred to early studies into conferences is that carried out by Goldstein and Conrad (1990), which pointed out how, although conferencing was widely recommended in composition pedagogy, and although many claims were made about the positive effects of conferencing on student writers, most claims, for both native-speaker and ESL writers, were based on the impressions and attitudes of participants. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) point out how none of the research had examined the discourse of conferences or the relationship between the discourse and subsequent student revisions. They cite studies by Carnicelli (1980), Zamel (1985) and Sokmen (1988) who each reached a similar conclusion on the effectiveness of conferencing that was based not on discourse occurring in conferences, but on students' and teachers' evaluations of conferences. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) also report four studies focusing on native-speakers during conferencing that involved an analysis of conference discourse. They point out how, in the first of these studies, although Freedman and Katz (1987) hypothesized that student input and control of the discourse accounted for effectiveness in improving student writing, in order to test their hypothesis they did not look at the relationship between these factors and subsequent student revisions. In the second study that Goldstein and Conrad (1990) cite, Walker and Elias (1987) compared the discourse in conferences rated highly by tutors and students with that during conferences rated lowly. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) add that there was no

discussion concerning how effective subsequent revisions were after each. Highly rated conferences tended to be more student focused, while those rated as low were more teacher-directed and teacher dominated. The two other studies that Goldstein and Conrad (1990) outline involved an analysis of conference discourse. Freedman and Sperling (1985) studied variation among students in the discourse they produced within conferences and concluded that conferences contain varied interaction that suggests the possibility of what they term 'differential instruction,' but do not examine the relationship between such instruction and student success. The other study, by Jacobs and Karliner (1977), compared conference discourse and subsequent student revision between two students. They discovered a relationship between the type of talk and the corresponding revisions, and from this Goldstein and Conrad (1990) conclude that 'the type of verbal interaction taking place in the conference has an influence on the type of subsequent revision

The key problem with the studies described above that involved conferencing is that, as they involved native-speakers, we cannot extrapolate too much from them for the purposes of EFL writers. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) state how, '...we cannot assume that non-native speakers will behave in conferences in the same ways that native speakers behave,' and warn against extending the conclusions of these four studies as in total they provide little actual evidence in relation to the effects of conferencing on subsequent student writer revision.

#### **2.4.7 Negotiating meaning during conferencing**

Goldstein and Conrad (1990), working with three competent ESL users, and based on the coding of data arising, discovered a strong relationship between the amount and types of negotiation taking place during the conferencing discourse and improvements made by student writers on follow-up drafts. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) sought answers to three questions: to what extent did ESL writing conferences ensure student input, to what extent was meaning negotiated in ESL writing conferences, and what was the relationship between the discourse in the conference and successful revision in the subsequent draft? The overall aim was to outline which elements, if any, in the conference discourse appeared to influence whether and to what extent students revised such areas. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) discovered that although meaning had been negotiated, conferences did not necessarily result in student input. Most importantly they noted how revisions seemed to occur when they had been negotiated.

#### **2.4.8 Limitations of previous research**

Also dealing with the effects of conferencing is Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997), which concerned whether changes in student writing could be tied to conferences. They state that although researchers have examined teacher written comments and conferences as important sources of feedback and instruction for developing writing, previous research on teacher-student writing conferences has had two limitations. Concerning the first, they state 'Researchers have rarely linked their analysis of the conferences to student writing in any systematic way, making it difficult to evaluate the effects of the

conferences. Concerning the second limitation, they posed a further research question over whether the status of the student or the type of writing course could be tied to differences in the conferencing process or its outcome. They explain that researchers have often not considered the larger contexts, including institutional expectations of both students and teachers or individual differences in ability, language or culture of students. The study found that all student revisions were conference related, while two other findings concerning the context were that the same treatment in the conference does not generate the same response from all students, and that what they term the 'divergent backgrounds' students bring to it may affect the conference. (1997: 51).

#### **2.4.9 Summary and research implications**

This chapter has looked at the potential for a variety of forms of feedback available to teachers of writing. These included sentence level correction, teacher written comments and electronic means of delivery. Two more interactive forms of feedback were also outlined: peer response and teacher taped commentary. All appear to have potential, and various studies described have indicated their value to the student writer. A review of the literature reveals how both teacher-taped commentary and conferencing in particular seem to have unexplored research potential for providing writers with helpful insights on how to improve their skills. Prior to narrowing the focus of this study as a whole, I felt it was necessary to carry out an investigative study into feedback practices used at IYTE. 4.14 explains how the outcome of this investigative stage indicates how conferencing became the eventual

focus. This decision was made based on current possibilities for teachers to arrange to meet students to discuss their writing face to face. Had there not been such time available, which to an extent became the case when the department moved (6.1.2), this study might have explored the use of taped commentary, as this would then have been more practical. It was also noticeable from my literature review that a key area involving the success or otherwise of feedback provision was linked to the discourse arising from conferencing and in particular from the level and types of negotiation involved between teacher and writer.

#### **2.4.10 Research aim**

Following Goldstein and Conrad (1990) and Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997), and based on the framework suggested by Burns (2005), this study later involved an analysis of the discourse of both teachers and student writers of English as a foreign language in an EAP context at higher education level in Turkey. This study focused as systematically as possible on the effects of conferences on student writing in order to evaluate how discourse features involved appeared to be related to the revision process. Unlike Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) this study does not look in detail at the larger contexts, but instead comments on aspects of this where possible. Another difference is that whereas Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) concerned the analysis of conferencing transcripts along with drafts one and two plus the first draft of the next assignment, this study in both stages of conferencing does not look to future assignments, although on reflection this may be a future research area for the AR team involved.

## **Chapter Three**

### **A qualitative paradigm**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks firstly at the concept of a research paradigm and then briefly at the nature of reality and knowledge and their relationship to this study. Four dominant but contrasting human science paradigms available to the qualitative researcher are then described (3.5), plus an outline of how these paradigms overlap. More specifically, this outline provides an intraparadigmatic and cross-paradigm analysis, and an account of why I believe a qualitative approach was the most appropriate for this study. The chapter then explains constructivism, the paradigm this study was based on, and how the tradition within which I worked, that of action research (AR), fits into this paradigm. Although this study does not discuss the issue, it is perhaps worth noting here that Burns (2005) discusses AR in relation to it being an emerging paradigm. The final part of this chapter looks at the main characteristics of qualitative research, along with their strengths and weaknesses, and how these features are related to this thesis.

#### **3.2 A working definition of paradigm**

Although the current general view is that paradigm wars are over, and that there has been a shift towards more pragmatic orientation, e.g. Bryman (2006), there may still be good reasons for clarifying the paradigmatic orientation of a research study. Although Masterman (1970) groups most of the twenty paradigms noted by Kuhn (1962) under the headings of metaphysical, sociological and construct, the comment in Richards (2003:33)

from Guba and Lincoln (1994:107) perhaps clarifies the most common perception of what a paradigm is: 'A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as for example, cosmologies and theologies do Guba and Lincoln (1994:116) conclude, 'Paradigm issues are crucial; no inquirer, we maintain, ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs or guides his or her approach A paradigm is thus the intellectual foundation of a research stance. The following sections look at perceptions of reality and knowledge. This is followed in 3.2.3 by a simplified summary of how I believe they relate to the research stance in this study, which adopted a qualitative approach towards AR involving conferencing on EAP essay writing.

### **3.2.1 Ontology**

Richards (2003:33) explains how any paradigmatic position is linked to our ontological perspective on the world, i.e. how we perceive reality. Contrasting stances within ontology, the study of the nature of being, may be categorised as *realist* or *relativist*. The former stance regards the world as something governed by laws and behaviour that can be measured, studied and understood, while the latter denies the existence of a single reality but sees it as a construct of different people, time and circumstances. Whereas the physical world may be interpreted in terms of positivism and realism, it is important to acknowledge how studies involving social sciences such as



educational research may be better interpreted with regard to relativism and constructivism.

### **3.2.2 Epistemology**

Our paradigmatic position is also linked to our epistemological beliefs, i.e. our perceptions of knowledge. Epistemology, the study of the nature of knowledge, may be categorised as either *objectivist* or *subjectivist*. Objectivists view knowledge as something accessible and transferable, while subjectivists build on local understanding and see knowledge as something created by interaction between the world and the individual. Whereas objectivists would opt for a quantitative analysis of data in order to organise knowledge, subjectivists would favour a qualitative approach and be more willing to work with fuzzy data that may to a degree only be explained by detecting patterns or coding categories.

### **3.2.3 Relating epistemology and ontology to this study**

Although Richards (2003) acknowledges that the objectivist-subjectivist, realist-relativist representations described in 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 are fairly crude extremes within which there is room for overlap, it is my belief that for social scientists like myself who are working with a qualitative approach, relativism and subjectivism form the basis of understanding the world, and are therefore the essence of the research stance in this study. The rules and laws governing what goes on in human sciences, and more specifically in second language education, cannot be easily discerned, are not really open to

interpretation and therefore cannot be analysed in the same manner as quantitative data.

With regard to the latter point, chapter four outlines how group and individual interviews enabled me to uncover the various ways in which feedback was provided in IYTE. Following this the thesis describes further phases of an AR study that looked at the discourse of two groups of three teachers conferencing with students on their essay first drafts and in 6.4.3 outlines how Nihat, Ömer and Seda respectively were able, by reflecting on the transcripts of their conferences, to create teacher-knowledge. The observation stage of Burns (2005), described in 9.5 – 9.7 illustrates the same point when transcripts of Stage Two conferencing were analysed by myself, Ece and Seda. A key realisation resulting from both stages of conferencing was that any effects of such a feedback method on revisions made in the follow-up draft could not be identified in a direct cause-effect manner.

### **3.3.1 Intraparadigmatic features**

It is important to relate to this thesis points made by Guba and Lincoln (1994) concerning intraparadigmatic features of constructivism. They point out how, according to this paradigm, reality exists ‘in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based and local and specific in nature,’ however elements of each of these may be shared among individuals or even cultures. Guba and Lincoln (1994) continue that elements are dependent on the persons or groups holding the construction and that these constructions are not more or less true, but simply more or less

informed or sophisticated. They add that such constructions and their associated realities are alterable. Such matters as these may be inferred from the investigative stage of this study outlined in chapter four, and in particular the group interviews (4.9), and individual interviews (4.13), in which the concept and notions of feedback provided on students' writing tend to vary according to teacher-experience and a view on what 'successful' writing consists of. The point is perhaps more clearly illustrated by the more informed and sophisticated approach made by teachers in Stage Two conferencing, who were able to build on points resulting from Stage One conferencing (6.4).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out that since the investigator and object of investigation are assumed to be linked, the findings of the investigation are created as the investigation proceeds. Due to this process, they continue, the conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears. Concerning this point, constant returns to the data in this study revealed a more delicate consideration of matters concerning both the interviews referred to above, and also to the degree of detail in transcripts arising from conferencing (Appendices F and K). Also in relation to this point is how the creation of categories as the study progressed enabled the AR team to locate features within the discourse of the conferences that members believed were related to 'success' in terms of alterations made in follow-up drafts.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) end their intraparadigmatic analyses by pointing out that the methodology of constructivism is both hermeneutical (interpretive) and dialectical (involving logical deduction). They explain how it follows that

individual constructions may be elicited and refined through interaction between and among investigator and respondents. In relation to this point this study regarded interviewing in both group and individual format as the initial basis of data gathering from which to proceed. It is worth pointing out how interviewing is a process where interaction itself 'constructs' positions. That is to say, what people say in interviews is at least in part constructed 'live' (there and then), although many of the comments may have been previously thought about or articulated. However, something in the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee provides impetus for articulation and clarification and thus the relationship is both reflexive and dialogic.

### **3.3.2 Cross-paradigm analyses**

#### **3.3.2.1 Ontology**

With regard to ontology, whereas positivism assumes an objective external reality and post-positivism assumes such a reality but acknowledges it may only be apprehended imperfectly, critical theory assumes a reality exists but is shaped by historically situated structures which Guba and Lincoln (1994:111) regard as limiting and confining. They conclude that it is the ontological position that differentiates constructivism from the other three paradigms, in that it 'assumes a multiple, apprehendable and sometimes conflicting social realities that are the products of human intellects, but that may change as their constructors become more informed and sophisticated. Relating the latter point to this study, as the AR team's analysis and the integration of new categories enabled members to gain more insight, we also became more informed.

### **3.3.2.2 Epistemology**

In contrast to the above, Guba and Lincoln (1994:111) note how in terms of epistemology it is the positions of critical theory and constructivism that differentiate them from the other two paradigms in that whereas the latter enable the investigator to determine more or less how things are or how they work, the epistemological basis of constructivism sees knowledge as created in interaction among investigator and respondents, while that of critical theory sees knowledge as value mediated. The issue of classifications of knowledge is described in 5.4. in terms of teacher-knowledge.

### **3.4 Implications of paradigmatic choices**

Guba and Lincoln (1994:112) state: 'Differences in paradigm assumptions cannot be dismissed as mere "philosophical differences"; implicitly or explicitly, these positions have important consequences for the practical conduct of inquiry, as well as for the interpretation of findings and policy choices. As this thesis illustrates in chapter nine, the reality in relation to the views of the AR team on how to conduct conferences altered following analysis of transcripts from Stage One and the resulting list of desirable conferencing features (6.4). The outcome was that Stage Two conferencing was both more informed and sophisticated. The knowledge resulting from AR on conferencing was created via the interaction between me as investigator and the interviewees as respondents, and reconstruction of matters via a dialectical method.

### **3.5 Qualitative paradigms**

From the above we may state that possible paradigms within which the qualitative researcher may engage range from positivism, post-positivism, constructivism (also referred to as interpretivism and naturalism), and critical perspectives. Positivism, based on the assumption that the universe and laws governing it are measurable concepts, has on the whole been rejected as a paradigm to adopt for social scientists working in the qualitative tradition.

Carr and Kemmis (1993:235) point out how AR rejects the positivist notions of rationality, objectivity and truth. They note how for the action researcher the desire is to improve on current practice, whereas for the positivist researcher ‘.. problems are posed by theories and the incompleteness or incoherence of theories’. They note too (ibid) how the methods of the action researcher and positivist researcher differ in that: ‘...action research requires a dialectical method, while the positivist researcher chooses the hypothetico-deductive method for the development of theory... Constructivism, as indicated in 3.3.2, is for many felt to be a more workable paradigm for social scientists, especially those working in the AR tradition; this is explained in more detail in 3.6.1

#### **3.6.1 Constructivism**

The paradigm that I believe reflects my own view of the nature of reality and knowledge is based on constructivism, the basic tenet of which holds that ‘reality’, which we can assume exists in the form of multiple realities, is socially constructed, and that knowledge is also socially and individually

constituted. Not only are there multiple realities but also individual contributions are individually accented by various voices and influences. Knowledge gained by teachers participating in Stages One and Two conferencing was thus not a constant, but, a social construction, and is illustrated by how teachers in Stage Two conferencing perceived themselves to be implementing points from 6.4. It is also illustrated in chapters ten to twelve where Ece and I constructed our versions of the outcomes of conferences we co-analysed.

Carr and Kemmis (1993) contrast AR with interpretive research (which I take here to also refer to constructivism), explaining how although they both aim to 'reclaim the meaning and significance of acts by interpretation... the interpretive researcher rests content when these significances have been regained. By contrast, the action researcher uses such understanding as a basis for transforming the social world; for praxis i.e. for sharing useful insights. This study engaged in AR working in the interpretivist / constructivist paradigm to unravel the significance of oral feedback and to analyse how such feedback assisted student writers, and in particular how specific features of the resulting discourse enabled or hindered developments in their writing.

The assumptions underlying constructivism are that human action and behaviour are constructed and reconstructed through interaction and experience, and that the purpose of research is to account for social realities via methods that tend to be naturalistic, exploratory and explanatory. To unpack this last point: in the context of this study it refers to how teachers at

IYTE perceived themselves as providers of feedback on EAP student writing, along with the role and identity they adopted when doing so. Via the interaction maintained with students' written work and personal experiences of feedback, views of the value of feedback and how it should best be provided appeared to change as teachers became more informed, which, as chapters nine to twelve illustrate, tended to result in a more sophisticated approach to conferencing.

Robson (2002:27) points out how constructivist researchers find unacceptable the positivistic notion of an objective known reality that can be measured by quantitative methods. In this study this pertains to the reality of the effect of feedback on writing. Robson describes how the task of the qualitative researcher is to understand what he terms 'multiple constructions of meaning'. According to Robson, research methods that include interviewing and observation are used to acquire multiple perspectives that help to enable the construction of reality. Robson also explains how research participants help to construct reality and how, due to the existence of multiple realities, 'research questions can not be fully established in advance of the process'. The latter point is exemplified by the various directions taken as this study proceeded, such as its movement from a focus in chapter nine on how teachers implemented features of conferencing, onto the relationship between the conference itself and alterations made on follow-up drafts, which is illustrated in chapters ten to twelve.



### **3.6.2 Relating constructivism to this study**

The research emphasis in this study employed the two methods Robson refers to above in order to focus on understanding the construction of multiple perspectives. Obtaining interviewees' constructions of reality was the guiding principle in the investigative stage (chapter four), an information gathering section that looked at various views on feedback on written work. The same emphasis, one which Richards (2003:38) describes as understanding how 'Actors are individuals with biographies, acting in particular circumstances at particular times and constructing meaning from events and interactions' continued throughout this study which investigated and subsequently informed what took place concerning the discourse of feedback on writing during conferencing. The following section outlines the paradigmatic context of AR described in Burns (2005), which is central to this study.

### **3.6.3 Evidence of constructivism in this study**

Working within a constructive paradigm in this study involved the realisation that no fully objective statement could be made, for example, with regard to the interview stages in the investigative study in chapter four, or general truths regarding analysis of data in stages one and two of conferencing. Thus versions of reality in the form of mental constructs that existed, concerning beliefs about feedback on writing in this study, have to be viewed as multiple, intangible and shared among teacher-participants, including myself as interviewer. As the study progressed, in the search for multiple constructions of meaning, we noted how the mental constructions of reality became not more or less true, but more or less informed or sophisticated. For example,

early in the study we believed the use of the L1 held little value to conferencing, a view we were obliged to alter later on as our interpretations of data revealed its benefits to student writers. A greater degree of sophistication is also evidenced in our views on, for example, the identification of features in the discourse of the conference that appeared to result in successful outcomes. Some features tended to appear more regularly than others, yet interpreting such relationships has to be viewed as subjective and open to question.

### **3.7 Justifying a qualitative research approach**

Due to an absence of data in the form of precise figures, research studies opting for a qualitative approach often tend to feel the need to defend themselves from claims that they do not measure up to the rigorous standards of quantitative studies that are felt to be more scientific. Guba and Lincoln (1994:106) note how 'counterpressures against quantification have emerged,' that they feel warrant a reconsideration of the value of qualitative data along with questioning the assumptions on which the accepted superiority of quantification tended to be based. As it is vital to justify the use of any research approach, it should be pointed out that although experiments and surveys used by quantitative researchers may well provide insights and information, in research studies involving the human sciences these tools fall short of being able to inform us of factors a qualitative approach may better reveal, since quantitative research tools '..are not designed to explore the complexities and conundrums of the immensely complicated social world that we inhabit,' Richards (2003:8). Consideration of these points led me to believe

a qualitative approach would be of more utility when attempting to unpack issues in this study such as coding transcripts of the group interview (Appendix D) in order to identify topics to further investigate, identifying features that appear to assist conferencing (6.3-6.4) and locating discourse features involved in Stage Two conferencing. Dörnyei (2007:35) explains how Denzin and Lincoln (2005a:6-9) conclude that 'qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own. .. Nor does qualitative research have a distinctive set of methods or practices that are distinctly its own Dörnyei (ibid) also points out how Denzin and Lincoln (2005a:10) state, 'Qualitative research is many things to many people He quotes Silverman (1997:14) who states 'There is no agreed doctrine underlying all qualitative social research', and Holliday (2004:731) who states 'Boundaries in current qualitative research are crumbling, and researchers are increasingly doing whatever they can to find out what they want to know In regard to this point there are perhaps strong arguments for an eclectic approach. In spite of the perhaps opaque picture of qualitative research that these comments portray, Dörnyei (2007) adds that 'there exists a core set of features that would universally characterise a properly conducted qualitative research study Such features are explained in 3.8.1–3.8.5. Following this, 3.9.1-3.9.5 outline the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research and the relationship between this study and some of those features.

### **3.8 Main characteristics of qualitative research**

Whereas surveys and experiments may be considered tools for quantitative researchers working within the positivist paradigm, methods such as interviewing and observing are the tools of the researcher working in a qualitative paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (1994b) sum up the approach this study pursued when they state: ‘...qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of unconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand. However, as Richards (2003:11) points out, it would be foolish to assume nothing quantitative may be mentioned in qualitative research, and how ‘qualitative inquiry recognises that decisions about degrees or precision are matters to be determined in the course of our enquiry rather than as a prelude to it. This point is exemplified by the fact that various parts of this study, in particular chapters six and nine, involved quantitative analyses. The following sections look in further detail at characteristics of qualitative research.

#### **3.8.1 Emergent research design**

One of the greatest strengths of a qualitative approach is its emergent nature which, as Dörnyei (2007:37) states: ‘..means that no aspect of the research design is tightly prefigured and a study is kept open and fluid so that it can respond in a flexible way to new details or openings that may emerge during the process of investigation. Ideally, according to Dörnyei, the qualitative researcher enters the research process with an open mind and no preconceived hypotheses. As a result, he continues, ‘The research focus is narrowed down only gradually and the analytic categories / concepts are

defined during, rather than prior to the process of the research Dörnyei later also points out how although Glaser and Strauss (1967) encourage qualitative researchers to ignore the research literature in order not to contaminate the data and to enter the research with a 'tabula rasa' and thus more easily allow the emergence of categories, others such as Miles and Huberman (1994) claim that it is in fact the researcher's background knowledge gained from the literature that enables them to identify details, subtleties and complexities in the data.

### **3.8.2 The nature of qualitative data**

Qualitative research works with a wide range of data which, when processed, are transformed into a textual form. Although not gathered with the aim of being measured in an objective manner, 'subsequent analysis', states Dörnyei (2007:39) 'can define categories through which certain aspects of qualitative data can be quantified As the overall aim of qualitative research is to make sense of a set of meanings in the observed phenomena, it is vital the data captures rich and complex details in order to provide a thick description.

### **3.8.3 Insider meaning**

Dörnyei (2007:38) explains how 'Qualitative research is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings, thus the goal is to explore participants' views of the situation being studied', and how 'It is a fundamental qualitative principle that human behaviour is based upon meanings which people attribute to and bring to situations, and it is only the actual participants themselves who can reveal the meanings and interpretations of their

experiences and actions The qualitative researcher attempts to see social phenomena from the perspective of the insider.

#### **3.8.4 Small sample size**

Another characteristic of qualitative research is that it is labour intensive and by necessity uses smaller numbers (what Dörnyei terms 'samples') than quantitative research, a point reflected in this study by the fact that the group and individual interviews plus Stage One conferencing consisted of six teachers in total. The final number of participants in this study was increased to eight during Stage Two conferencing after Nihat and Ömer left and were replaced by Ece and myself. Full details of participants in this study can be found in 7.1.1 and 8.4.

#### **3.8.5 Interpretive analysis**

Dörnyei (2007:38) states how: 'Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive, i.e. the research outcome is ultimately the product of the researcher's subjective interpretation of the data,' and quotes Miles and Huberman (1994:7) who comment that 'The researcher is the main 'measurement device' in the study Thus the researcher's own values, personal history, and position on gender, culture, class and age become, according to Haverkamp (2005), quoted in Dörnyei (2007:35), an integral part of the inquiry. Such a feature is a possible weakness of qualitative research, and is dealt with in more detail in 3.9.

### **3.9 Possible weaknesses of a qualitative approach**

In terms of sample size and generalizability, Dörnyei (2007:41) quotes Duff (2006) who warns us that although the tendency for qualitative research is to examine a small number of cases, analysis of which may prove insightful, 'the specific conditions or insights may not apply broadly to others Dörnyei adds how Yates (2003:224) calls this issue 'the potential over-reading of the individual stories In this regard Stage One conferences revealed that teachers involved did not revert to the students' L1, yet, as Stage Two conferences (chapters nine to twelve) showed, it would have been unwise to conclude early on that the L1 would never be used.

In terms of the researcher role, Dörnyei quotes Miles and Huberman (1994:10) who state: 'The strengths of qualitative data rest very centrally on the competence with which their analysis is carried out It is possible that teachers involved in analysing transcripts resulting from the two stages of conferencing in this study were influenced by personal idiosyncrasies, such as degrees to which they felt involved or interested. In order to provide firm safeguards against this it is perhaps vital to ensure AR team members comprehend the requirements of the various parts of the study.

Three other criticisms levelled by Dörnyei at qualitative research include firstly a lack of methodological rigour, although as Dörnyei (2007:41) points out, 'the past two decades have seen a marked shift towards applying rigorous procedures in qualitative studies'. A second criticism is the production of theories that are either too complex or too narrow, while a third is related to

the fact that qualitative studies are too time-consuming and labour intensive. Due to this they tend to work with relatively small numbers, which in turn leads back to criticisms described above with regard to generalisability.

### **3.10 Suitability of qualitative research**

In spite of the possible shortcomings indicated in 3.9, I felt a qualitative research approach to this study was suitable for the following reasons. Hyland (2003: 193) has pointed out how there is still comparatively little known about conferencing, and thus the exploratory nature of qualitative research and the detailed study of a few cases was, I believed, particularly appropriate. A second advantage of qualitative research in this study is that, due to what Dörnyei terms the 'participant-sensitivity' and validation by participants, there is the increased possibility for making sense of complexity. Members of the AR teams for both stages of conferencing worked, via detailed observation and not just assumption, on separating what Dörnyei (2007:39) terms 'real phenomena from intellectual fabrications'. A further point in favour of a qualitative approach is made by Dörnyei (2007:40), who points out that whereas quantitative studies are often written up with concluding remarks concerning the necessity for further research to explain unexpected aspects the data may throw up, in qualitative studies what he terms 'the flexible, emergent nature' of a qualitative study allows the researcher to investigate such issues more immediately. Dörnyei cites work by Gherardi and Turner (1999) which, in regard to how projects may be disrupted by unexpected events, concluded that since qualitative research is more of a journey into the unknown than quantitative studies (which may be planned in advance) 'such



breakdowns look less surprising and can be handled within the research framework. In this regard, chapter eight of this thesis describes how two members of the AR team left, and how the team was subsequently restructured prior to Stage Two conferencing, plus how Ece and I were able to continue with the study in spite of Seda's departure (11.2).

Three other points suggesting the suitability of a qualitative approach to this study are as follows: firstly, in contrast to the tabulated data of quantitative studies, qualitative accounts that use the words and categories of participants make it much easier to produce a convincing and vivid case for a wide range of audience; secondly, qualitative studies have the ability to broaden our understanding of an area by adding to the repertoire of possible interpretations of human experience by adding data-driven depth to an analysis of an issue; thirdly, qualitative research offers a particularly useful starting point for longitudinal investigations.

### **3.11 Introduction: action research (AR)**

This chapter has till now looked at constructivism and qualitative research. As this thesis is based on AR, this section looks initially at the literature of AR, at what AR is, along with various approaches, and then briefly describes critical and then practical AR. Following this it looks at how AR relates to teacher development and then AR processes, principally the one adopted in this study, that of Burns (2005).

### **3.11.1 Action research**

Action research is work carried out as a response to perceived local needs, and investigates issues of practical importance using appropriate data collection procedures; it uses these investigations to change, modify and improve current practices. According to Elliott (1991), 'Action research is a process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice, try out new strategies, and record their work in a form that is understandable by other teachers. Related forms of AR include action learning, reflective practice, exploratory practice, action science, practitioner research, participatory research, and collaborative / cooperative enquiry. It should also be noted how the adoption of AR is in no way restricted to its use in the field of education. With the inclusion of chapters relating to Buddhism, Winter (2009) and Existentialism, Feldman (2009), Noffke and Somekh (2009) illustrates how AR has expanded in the last twenty years.

Indicating the issue concerning terminology over 'action' and 'research', Somekh and Zeichner (2009) explain how, in their experience of starting out on AR projects within the K-12 age range, it is often suggested that the term 'research' be removed, whereas in contrast in higher education settings the request is often for the term 'action' to be dropped. It is generally accepted, however, that the 'action' feature concerns the dual aspect of action and research, in which participants are involved in a process of planned intervention during which concrete strategies, processes or activities are developed within the research context. Mann (2006) states: 'Intervention through action occurs in response to a perceived problem, puzzle or question,

in order to bridge a gap between the ideal and the reality that people in the context see as problematic in some way, when gaps are noticed in relation to teaching, learning, materials, syllabus design, institutional management or administration,' That action research often equates with change is highlighted by Henry and Kemmis (1985:3) who state, '[Action research] requires people to put their practices, ideas and assumptions about institutions to the test by gathering compelling evidence which could convince them that their previous practices were wrong or wrong-headed', while Nunan (1989:16) suggests that '... the exploration of classroom issues and problems should lead teachers from practice to theory and back to practice again as a sort of ongoing professional growth spiral

In relation to the point above by Henry and Kemmis, this study shows how, based on insight gained, earlier preferences for feedback may be replaced, and how in doing so it partially addresses the issue of AR raised by Burns (2005: 63) who concludes '...the current goals and outcomes tend to be in the realms of personal / professional action and teacher growth rather than in the production of knowledge about curriculum, pedagogy or educational systems

### **3.11.2 Approaches to action research**

Burns (2005) describes the major characteristics of three generations and types of AR: technical, practical and critical. Technical AR has its base in the natural sciences, and works from a paradigmatic stance in which reality is measurable and knowledge is a deductive matter. It contrasts clearly with practical AR in that it works from a pre-defined problem. The nature of

understanding involved in technical AR assumes events may be explained in terms of causes and effects, while the purpose of research is to discover the laws of reality.

### **3.11.3 Critical action research**

Carr and Kemmis (1993:237) point out how 'Personal knowledge is at the heart of the action research process: personal knowledge is the source of the ideas and interpretive categories used by teachers to articulate their experience and bring it under self-conscious control through the action research process', while Kemmis (2006) comments on the critical stance outlined in Carr and Kemmis (1993) by listing five kinds of what he terms 'inadequate action research'; inadequate in the sense that they are not critical. Kemmis's examples are based on the premise that AR must meet the ethical test of being directed towards positive change, or, in the words of Lewin (1946:203), involve research leading to social action and how it should have '...a positive and generative impact on practice, be transparent and accountable to the field of practice, and trustworthy in its nature and enactment Kemmis (2006), arguing for a critical education science, believes AR should have the quality of a critical dimension that explores issues both inside and beyond the practice. Extending from this critical dimension is a need, according to Kemmis (ibid), for action researchers and practitioner researchers to tell unwelcome truths.

#### **3.11.4 Practical action research**

It would appear that, of the three types of AR outlined in 3.11.3, practical AR best fits the constructive paradigm within which this study took place (described in 3.6.1) since its philosophical base is hermeneutics, i.e. it seeks to interpret things, while it is concerned with a nature of reality that Burns (2005) labels 'multiple, holistic and constructed'. Practical action research works around solving a problem that is defined in context, on the assumption that the status of knowledge is both inductive and theory producing, and concerns an understanding of events described by Burns (2005) as 'interaction between the external context and individual thinking'. The purpose of practical AR is to discover the meanings people make of actions, while any resulting change is value-bounded and dependent on individuals involved. The characteristics of practical AR that Burns (2005) outlines reflect to a large degree those of the constructivist paradigm.

#### **3.11.5 Action research as professional development**

Related to the personal knowledge aspect of AR is its developmental strand, discussed by Nunan (1993:41) who explains how AR represents what he terms an 'inside out' approach to professional development. This contrasts with the 'outside in' approach, one often involving an expert lecturer 'coming in with the good news'. The inside out approach begins with the concerns and interests of practitioners, placing them at the centre of the inquiry process. Nunan (1993:42) comments that although the benefits of professional development are justification enough for the implementation of AR, 'further rationale comes from the research process itself (1993:41). The notion of

teacher development and teacher-knowledge is further discussed in chapter thirteen, part B.

Within the framework of eight dimensions of variations in AR developed by Zeichner (2007 and 2008), this study illustrates the first of Noffke's (1997) three motivations for educators who conduct AR: '...the motivation to better understand and improve one's practice...' Following on from this, and informed by the framework established by Zeichner (ibid), the analysis carried out by Somekh and Zeichner (2009) resulted in a table used to derive five variations of AR. This study would appear to fit into the fifth category there, 'Action research as locally sponsored systemic reform sustained over time', involving 'grassroots efforts of teachers to improve their own practices'. (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009: 19).

### **3.11.6 Chapter summary**

This chapter has looked at the concept of a research paradigm and sought to relate epistemology and ontology to this study. It has also looked at the qualitative paradigm of constructivism, plus justifications for using such a paradigm and a qualitative approach. The second part of this chapter has outlined what action research is, along with three types of such research.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Exploring and Identifying**

#### **4. Introduction**

While chapter three introduced the notion of AR and its relation to this study, this chapter of the thesis more fully explains what AR is, then outlines the stages of the AR framework used in this study, that proposed by Burns (2005). Although throughout this study I refer to Burns (2005) as a framework she advocates for action research, it would be more accurate to state that she suggests AR is a series of interrelated practices. Chapter titles in this thesis that refer to various stages of Burns (2005) and mini-cycles of analysis do so in order to foreground the particular phase of the study at that time. In 8.1, for example, I indicate how the AR model in Burns (2005) is a cyclical process of interrelated practices

This chapter looks at issues related to AR, in particular negotiating access, then at instruments used to generate data, especially group and individual interviews with teachers at IYTE. The chapter outlines feedback topics noted and ends with a suggested research topic for the study. It should be pointed here that when the word 'stages' appears all in lower case it refers to the stages involved in Burns (2005). I have used the capitalised 'Stage One' and 'Stage Two' when referring to conferences carried out with the first and second team of teachers involved in this study.

#### 4.1 Action research processes

Burns (2005) points out that while variations of Lewin's original concept of AR (1946) have been proposed, the best known is that by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) which involves four essential movements: **planning** → **action** → **observation** → **reflection**, 'evolving through a reiterative and self-reflective spiral or loop, and repeated according to the scope, purposes, and outcomes of the research. More specifically, this model involves a planning stage which is dialogic between real constraints and potential for what Burns (2005) terms more 'effective' action. This is followed by the action stage that consists of controlled intervention and a working towards improvement. The observation stage details and evaluates the critically informed action, using what she terms 'open-eyed' and 'open-minded' observation plans, categories and measurements, while the reflection is evaluative and descriptive and seeks to make sense of the processes, problems, issues and constraints. Burns (2005:59) points out how Elliott (1991) criticises the variation presented by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) for 'over-representing action research as a series of fixed and predictable steps,' and how others such as McNiff (1988) have found Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) variation too systematic. Hopkins (1993) also warns of the dangers of representing what should be free and open courses of action in a pre-specified way. This study sought flexibility within the framework Burns (2005) proposes, illustrated below in box 4a and outlined in more detail in 5.1.



## 4.2 An action research process for this study

Burns (2005) describes a more detailed framework of eleven of what she terms ‘interrelated experiences’ that she identified in AR carried out by teacher researchers in Australia (Burns 1999). The basic framework she describes is shown in box 4a.

### Box 4a: Burns (2005): overall framework

exploring → identifying → planning → data collecting → analysing / reflecting → hypothesising / speculating → intervening → observing → reporting → writing → presenting

The first stage is exploring, which involves feeling the way into the research topic. The initial study outlined later in this chapter provides coverage of this stage. This is followed by identifying, at which stage fact finding takes place in order to refine the topic. Following this is planning, in which an action plan is drawn up in order to gather data. How I planned for collection of data is dealt with in chapter five of this thesis. Collecting data, outlined in this thesis in 5.9, takes place and is carried out by techniques related to the action. The next stage Burns (2005) refers to as the analysing / reflecting stage, outlined in chapter six, in which the data is analysed in order to stimulate early reflections. Following this is hypothesising / speculating in order to make predictions on how to proceed based upon the analysis and reflection. This stage is dealt with in chapter seven of this thesis. As box 4a indicates, intervening forms the next stage. This appears in chapter eight, which concerns changing and modifying approaches based on analyses of further data. The next stage concerns observing, which in this thesis relates to the outcome of teachers engaging in further conferencing. This is outlined in

chapter nine, while chapters ten to twelve illustrate how mini-cycles of analysis (MCAs) took place, each involving more refinement of the tools with which to analyse the data generated during the final three conferences.

The final three stages relate to reporting, writing and presenting the research. These involve firstly verbalising, documenting, and then delivering the results to an audience of readers. While most of the study reflects verbalising and then documenting our findings, by the end of this five year study I had delivered presentations on our research on five occasions, firstly at TESOL Arabia (2007), following this in Finland at the Turku Summer University (2007), Izmir Ege University (2007) and Istanbul Doga Middle School (2008) and Istanbul Aydin University (2008). [www.waynetrotman.com](http://www.waynetrotman.com) provides links to details of these presentations.

Burns (2005:59) explains that AR in practice is much 'messier' than most models suggest and that processes experienced by action researchers are 'best viewed as necessarily adaptive to the educational situations and circumstances of the participants and to the particular social, cultural and political exigencies that motivate and surround them I felt that the framework she outlines would, if used flexibly, enable this study to proceed. Although the stages appear, at least on paper, to be clearly defined, Burns (2005) refers to them as 'interactive phases What became clear from chapter eight onwards was how, involving MCAs, they may also be regarded as inter-related experiences or practices.

### **4.3 Problematic issues of action research**

Although referring more specifically to classroom research, Dörnyei's explanation of how the problems of research are usually underplayed by research reports ((2007:177)) may be extended to AR. He quotes Schachter and Gass (1996:viii) who state: 'Reports of research projects make it all look so simple... There is no indication of the blood, sweat and tears that go into getting permission to undertake the project, that go into actual data collection, that go into transcription, and so forth Dörnyei also refers to Rossiter (2001) who noted how none of the research manuals she had reviewed detailed the true complexities of the research process, and also to the work of Duff and Early (1996) who explain how the downplaying or dismissal of such issues acts as a disservice to other researchers, especially those new to the field. In this regard, this thesis responds to these points in that none of the complex or problematic issues has been deliberately omitted in the hope of gaining admiration. Instead, such matters have all been documented, along with how I and others involved responded to them, in particular concerning changes in the make-up of the AR team. These matters, referred to below in 4.4, are later discussed in 13.3.1a – 13.5a in relation to limitations of this long-term study.

### **4.4 Issues relating to this study**

It is perhaps unwise to engage in AR without bearing in mind Nunan's comment on how, '...it is clear that AR is difficult, problematic, and, in some cases, inconclusive. It consumes a great deal of time, and often strains the goodwill of the teachers involved, as well as those with whom they work,' Nunan (1993:46). In an early stage of this study some of these issues began

to emerge, such as when research became problematic and time-consuming. Although the initial AR team comprised only three members, short, ad hoc meetings with individual members had to be arranged to ensure the team were able to carry out and record conferences. For example, in the first conference set up by Nihat both students failed to turn up, which led to the conferences taking place almost a week later. Goodwill was strained when conferences I requested take place so that our study could continue failed to transpire due to teaching commitments and then further student absence.

A second point of conflict and tension arose early in this study concerning my dual role as both action researcher and coordinator of writing at IYTE. On the one hand my duty led me to request grades from written exams and portfolio assessment, while it also meant requesting the AR team find time to conference. I took care not to be too pressing in either role, although, at least morally, personal research interests had to come second to my professional role at IYTE. These were, however, of a minor nature compared with a later event taking place following the data collecting phase when Nihat and Ömer, without informing me, took extended leave to complete their own doctoral work, thus severely limiting the possibility for us to carry out any further research for the time being. This is documented in 8.2, while issues of Seda's departure from the AR team during Stage Two conferencing are documented in 11.2.

#### **4.5 Investigative study: introduction and research stance**

This section outlines stages one and two of the framework suggested by Burns (2005), those of exploring and identifying, and functions as an investigative study. It includes details of the research tradition in which we worked, as well as outlining related methods and techniques that were used. Also dealt with are issues faced when negotiating access to the data this stage required.

The investigative study consisted of firstly group interviews with five teachers of writing and then, based on transcript analysis to locate emerging research topics, i.e. fairly obvious features, for individual follow-up interviews with the same teachers. The investigative study therefore consists of primarily qualitative data along with an outline of subsequent findings. Following these stages, conclusions and then implications for further stages of Burns (2005) are outlined in 4.14. As the eventual focus of this study was to investigate how conferencing assisted student writing, the data provided by this investigative stage created the background of my approach to later stages.

#### **4.6 Preview: aims and focus**

The intention in the investigative stage was to explore the current context and the extent to which it was felt by both teachers and students in IYTE that teacher feedback provided enabled improvements in students' writing. Based on evidence collected via interviews with teachers the research focus then shifts to conferencing. The research focus was thus on how conferencing may

enable improvement in terms of accuracy and organisation within students' work on a single essay written during the IYTE EAP programme.

#### **4.7 Negotiating access: introduction**

This section of the investigative stage outlines issues involved with negotiating and managing access to the primary means of data collection. It looks firstly at access and ethics, then at making contact, personal access and representing research. Dörnyei (2007:63) quotes Miles and Huberman (1994:28) who state: 'Any qualitative researcher who is not asleep ponders moral and ethical questions In this regard negotiation of entry is a vital but often neglected aspect of qualitative research methodology. At the same time, successful entry at the expense of goodwill can fatally undermine data gathering. When seeking access to their attitudes towards writing and their provision of feedback on students' work I felt it important to bear in mind that teachers at IYTE, like all ordinary citizens, tend to value their privacy and that without clarifying matters, although at the outset they may be interested in assisting on a limited basis, they may not enjoy systematic and continued requests from a researcher. Dörnyei (2007:64) points out how '... as human beings with moral principles, we cannot deny either that there is more to life than research, and if there is a possibility for a clash between the researcher's and the participants' interests, it is clear where the priorities should lie Access to students' and teachers' work therefore has to be carefully negotiated. The following sections concern gaining such access and related issues.

#### **4.7.1 Arranging consent**

Dörnyei (2007:64) quotes Punch (2005) who points out that issues concerning ethics are more acute in qualitative than quantitative research because the former ‘..often intrudes more into the human private sphere: it is inherently interested in peoples’ personal views and often targets sensitive or intimate matters Dörnyei (2007:64) continues by pointing out the tension between on the one hand the researcher realising that ethical issues may be a hindrance, and on the other the need to be aware that in a politically correct age ethical issues can be blown so far out of proportion as to help grind the research to a halt. It is worth adding, however, that Dörnyei (2007:65) also points out how Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) observe that discussions on ethical issues tend to be marginalised. Dörnyei suggests this is due to the assumption that fellow researchers reading the report are already aware of them. Throughout this study no such assumptions were made. At all stages I was sensitive to the issues relating to permission (Appendix A), agreement to be recorded (Appendix B) and explanations of what ‘involvement’ meant (Appendix J). The following sections look at several key ethical dilemmas and issues.

Consultation in order to arrange consent with persons such as directors is likely to involve Dingwall’s (1980) hierarchy of consent. Richards (2003) points out that it is important to know how far any consent given may actually extend, and whether the consent was given freely or under an element of coercion. One suggestion Richards (2003) mentions is offering something in return for cooperation and assistance with access. As 4.2 explains, under the name of IYTE, I provided seminars at national and international conferences on the

progress of this study. With these points in mind, I negotiated access to teachers and their work via a letter to the IYTE Director (Appendix A) in which I briefly outlined the study.

#### **4.7.2 Arranging participation**

Richards (2003) points out that 'All the evidence of the literature points unequivocally to the conclusion that it is personal contact which is likely to open doors'. It would have been easy to overlook such matters during this study, therefore this was another reason for a letter (Appendix A) written to the IYTE Director outlining my research intentions. The content related to issues on representing the research but ensured not too much detail was revealed too soon. I was given permission by the Director to solicit interest in this study in which six teachers were invited to participate in a group interview, described in detail in 3.4.2. All were current teachers of writing at IYTE, and all with experience of teaching writing in the higher education sector in Turkey. Further details of the members of this group along with why the group interview format was chosen are given in 4.8.2 and 4.8.4, respectively.

#### **4.7.3 Relationships**

Dörnyei (2007:65) explains how qualitative research, with its degree of close contact, especially during individual interviews, may often result in intimate relationships in the attempt by the researcher to establish rapport and empathy while trying to gain access to participants' lives. Ryen (2004), for example, discusses the issue of flirting with adult participants. One other issue also concerns how to end a research project, since bringing it to an end too



abruptly may leave participants with a feeling of having been used. Feeling that a letter of thanks to each was perhaps unnecessary, when the time came for AR team members to depart, or for the final team to disband, I took the time to thank them individually and encourage them to visit me to discuss any related matters. All participants are named in the acknowledgements on page five.

#### **4.7.4 Access to data**

Concerning personal access, my professional role in the writing unit at IYTE is described in more detail in 1.4, which outlines the context in which this study took place. It is important to note that my relationship with colleagues was as their administrative coordinator, a role with more responsibility to organise the teaching programme, and not one with power to promote or berate. Having direct access to such a wide range of potential research data required a great degree of sensitivity. Sections below outline further issues regarding access, then types of data that were available, along with how access to each type was negotiated. A key point in regard to data is over its ownership and to what extent the data belongs to the researcher. In a multi-method project degrees of ownership may vary according to the data type. Related issues concern editing, restricting access to and releasing data, all of which required discussion prior to all phases of this study.

#### **4.7.5 Representing research to participants**

Richards (2003) suggests there is a fine line between limited description and deliberate deception, and that we cannot give away too much or we face the

risk of compromising the research before it has even begun. However, I did not feel it necessary to withhold details of what I was currently planning to do in this study. A further part of the negotiation phase to address was the way in which the data was to be used. The initial letter (Appendix B) soliciting interest was informative, but did not provide in-depth explanations of main research intentions.

Bearing in mind the above considerations, the following section details how I negotiated access to sources of research data. It explains research instruments used, including group and individual interviews with teachers.

#### **4.8 Research instruments used: the research interview**

This section outlines the qualitative research interview and precedes an account of how I set up and carried out the group interview (4.11). It is followed in 4.13 by an account of the individual interviews. The research tool involved in both was the in-depth semi-structured interview, which Rossman and Rallis (1998:124) identify as ‘the hallmark of qualitative research’.

Interviewing is one of several research methods that may be used in qualitative research and is a central feature in AR. As a dialogic process, interviewing should be regarded as a means of both data generation and data collection. One implication of the interview is the point made by Baker (1997) that questions, instead of being seen as a means of obtaining data, are themselves an integral part of the data. This is linked to the concept of interviews as co-constructed texts between the interviewer and interviewee, in

which interviewer turns and questions guide the 'data' that the interviewee 'provides' on such dimensions as relevance, focus and causal relations.

I chose interviewing as the central method for data generation. This was due firstly to the congenial atmosphere of the IYTE writing unit, as well as the ease with which it was possible to arrange for follow-up member-validation of transcripts. The section below deals with the methodology of interviewing in two main parts. It firstly looks at interviewing procedures and techniques, then after a brief introduction it outlines matters for consideration when interviews for this study were being set up, and explains question types, questioning strategies and degrees of directiveness.

It is important to emphasise here that since the interviews took place in real time, care was required both when setting things up and during the event. Opportunities in the group interview arose for gaining in-depth insights that, after analysing the transcript, I realised were lost perhaps due to a lack of concentration as the conversation moved onto areas I felt were of less significance to the study. A major advantage of interviewing was that since it was recorded and followed up with a transcript, revisiting and re-experiencing the talk was fully possible. This enabled the possibility of a follow-up individual interviews to probe identified but previously missed topics.

#### **4.8.1 Setting up the group interview**

Working through a checklist of points was vital when setting up the group interview. Preliminary questions concerned exactly who the interviewees

should be, how many there should be, and whether they should be interviewed in an order that best served my research aim. Although I scanned the list, no particular order other than a group interview suggested itself. I felt it would be unwise, though, to select interviewees that were either over-reticent or domineering, while currently over-busy teachers were also excluded.

#### **4.8.2 Interviewees**

At the outset, I invited six teachers at IYTE, a convenience sample, to participate in the interview phase of the investigative study. One later declined and thus the number was reduced to five. All names are real; pseudonyms were offered but not requested. The teachers were: Nihat and Ömer (male) along with Medine, Eylem and Devrim (female). Nihat and Ömer were both students at doctoral level and thus had experience of research matters; each also had experience of teaching EAP writing at IYTE. Medine, an experienced teacher of EAP writing, had recently completed her Master's in ELT. Eylem had five years' experience of EAP writing. Devrim was relatively new to teaching EAP writing.

It is interesting to note here one of the problems of a long-term study such as this. Due to their own doctoral thesis time constraints, both Ömer and Nihat had to leave this study for a short but key period. Medine left for maternity leave, while Eylem married and followed her husband to work in Istanbul. This aspect of the study is further discussed in chapter thirteen, which illustrates possible limitations of AR studies. On reflection, at this point in the study I was

not sensitive to the ethics involved in gaining permission from students prior to their participation in the study. Appendix J indicates how prior to Stage Two conferencing I explained to students what their involvement in this study would mean. I later also requested permission from all students involved in this study for their full names to appear in the final version of this thesis. This letter appears in Appendix M.

#### **4.8.3 Interview considerations**

A key consideration at this point was when and where to carry out the group interview. Of global concern was giving myself sufficient time to set up and fit the interview into my research schedule, while of local concern was the time and energy interviewees had available in their working week. I had to consider whether they could all make it for a punctual start at the appointed time. From the options that were available, a quiet but familiar nearby room was used. I asked potential interviewees to let me know the most suitable day and time for them to take part in the interview and chose accordingly. Interviewees were made aware beforehand of the approximate length of the interview and how much time prior to and post the interview they would be asked to wait. They were also made aware that the interview would be in group format with the possibility of individual interviews only briefly mentioned. At a later date all present at the group interview agreed to participate in individual interviews.

#### **4.8.4 Reasons for group interview format**

I felt that as all participants were colleagues, a group interview with less inhibiting circumstances would offer the possibility for generation of rich data

by bringing up themes and bouncing ideas off each other. It may be argued that such an interview format may be inhibiting for interviewees who perhaps find it hard to compete for the floor during the discussion, and that persons with domineering natures would take charge of proceedings. Further analysis of the transcript indicated the floor had in fact been dominated, and that reticent teachers who may have had more to contribute had been prevented from doing so by one of the participants. Another advantage of my follow-up individual interviews was that points not covered with all interviewees due to such members were returned to and further probed.

#### **4.8.5 Research ethics**

Ethical considerations need to be observed at each stage of carrying out research. Unwary participants may not initially consider the possible harm their comments may cause themselves or others. The ethics of recording the research interview are further dealt with in 4.9. At this point conditions of data recording, confidentiality, editing and data dissemination were clearly established. In a letter soliciting participation in this study I emphasised that any comments made by interviewees which they felt might be misconstrued could be deleted from the transcript after the interview was over. I pointed out initially that data would be read only by my supervisor and used by myself for later analysis of emerging research topics. On discovering it later, I informed participants that a second supervisor and later upgrade panel members at Warwick University would also read the work, and that the research would become a document available for public reading. Neither at this point nor later did interviewees show concern over these matters.

#### **4.8.6 Permission and technical matters**

To interview participants and for a room to be made available in which to do so, I obtained permission in writing from IYTE authorities beforehand. A preliminary check with the authorities was made to see that no other meetings that may have clashed were scheduled for the intended interviewing time and date. A final check of these details was carried out the day before and on the day of the interviews. Appendices A-C demonstrate how I obtained permission to set up and carry out the group interview in an ethically suitable manner. I prepared my interviewer's list of questions and points to cover in advance with main and subsidiary questions and interview points clearly laid out. Other matters addressed before the group interview concerned the efficiency of recording equipment, which at the time appeared unproblematic; 4.9.3 outlines how it was perhaps unwise to assume so.

#### **4.8.7 Developing an interview guide**

It is unwise to interview without consideration of what the aim of the interview is, or what it is setting out to achieve. The key research question concerned discovering how teachers of writing in IYTE provided feedback on students' essay writing, and all further considerations in my guide revolved around this. Consideration was given to the construction, and placement in the interview, of the key questions I was seeking answers to. Where possible, the interview was based around main and subsidiary questions that were also linked to main and subsidiary topics. As my research aim in the investigative study was to locate current attitudes to feedback, this was inserted in the middle of my interview with carefully-constructed and increasingly focused back-up

questions. I felt it was important not to over-emphasise the ‘big questions’ or those which I believed may have led to a too-tightly structured interview.

It is important to see things from the point of view of those being interviewed. Interviewees throughout this study were attending out of goodwill and possibly had better things to do; overlong questions might not elicit informative responses and therefore I adopted a gentler approach. To ‘warm up’ the interviewee, and put them at ease, a suitable ‘grand tour’ question was inserted, such as that suggested by Spradley (1979), i.e. “Talk me through a typical writing lesson” and “Could you explain to me..?”. Richards (2003) suggests that, after planning a list of questions and analysing it from the point of view of the interviewees, a pilot interview be carried out and, on the basis of this, any necessary changes should be made. Finding participants for a group pilot interview was, I felt, going to add to the logistical load when setting things up. Pilot interviews are perhaps more advisable for individual interviews than for group ones, yet because individual interviews in this study were based on specific questions relating to the earlier group interview described above, I felt they would be unsuitable.

#### **4.8.8 Summary of interview preparation**

I made details and conditions apparent to interviewees, and all were expected to turn up. Goodwill and courtesy were uppermost in my mind at all times during data generation via the interview since interviewees stand to gain little and, if they feel their dignity or reputation is being compromised, they need only walk away. It should be noted too that as interviewees may change their



minds, it is best to carry out the interview as soon as possible. After a week of setting things up, immediately prior to recording the group interview, one of my carefully chosen interviewees (one who had also taken me a while to persuade to attend) informed me only minutes before we began that she could not attend due to family reasons. Although displeased, I could only accept this. Inwardly I had to bear in mind that her assistance may have been required later in the study; as things turned out it was not. The presence of other participants suggested they did not feel they were obliged to attend, but still did so.

#### **4.8.9 Reflections on group interview preparation**

After this, my first experience of interviewing in this study, I felt that given the possibility to repeat the event I would do things very differently. Having devoted time and energy to getting permission for it, then setting up the group interview and writing an interview guide, I struggled to deal with what I had imagined would be the formalities of finding the key to the room in which we were to record and also to find two suitable audio-cassette recorders. Two copies were made in case one failed to function correctly. On reflection, I had overlooked the fact that audio-cassette players in my institution were only used for that purpose; hardly any had recording functions. This resulted in hunting around at the last minute. Audio-tapes on which to record were bought only an hour before the interview. As a sound-check had not been carried out in the recording room, key parts of my taped interview proved to be either partially or totally inaudible. A simple sound check would have led me to firstly realise the weakness of the recording equipment and secondly to

invite interviewees to sit much nearer the internal microphone. Both would have caused less anxiety when transcribing the discussion.

Problems experienced during the group interview led me to make different arrangements for the individual interviews (4.13). As a result of problems with audio-recording I firstly borrowed a digital voice recorder (4.9.3) then invested in a digital voice-recorder which I used in a problem-free manner for all interviews carried out in Stage Two conferencing.

#### **4.9 Teacher group interview: introduction**

Whereas the above has looked at issues to be tackled when setting up the research interview and how in this study they were negotiated, the following sections outline steps that took place during the group interview of the investigative study. After managing access to teachers of writing via a letter to the director (Appendix A), the first step involved a letter given to teachers of writing in order to judge initial interest in assisting with this study. This letter (Appendix B) did not at this point seek to explain the intended research aim in detail. The next step consisted of putting together an interview guide (Appendix D) and arranging a time and date for the group interview.

Based on the results of the letter (Appendix B) I interviewed as a group those teachers agreeing to participate in the study. I made a transcript of the recording, with teachers' permission, of comments made at this initial interview. Later, in individual interviews, I returned to relevant points raised. Based on Richards (2003:177), the ethical issues when recording interviews

concerned explaining roughly why I wished to record and assuring those involved that confidentiality was paramount. I also offered to allow teachers to read transcripts if they wished, and offered to share findings or insights. An indication of my own development as a researcher concerns how later in this study both production and analyses of transcripts of conferences became more of a collaborative affair. Further issues concerning transcribing are outlined in 5.11.

#### **4.9.1 Group interview**

At the start I informed interviewees that at the end of the recording session they would have the opportunity to listen to the tape and remove any comments they had made which they felt might have misrepresented their own personal views. Before the set time-limit had arrived none of the group had commented on this matter or took this opportunity to edit. I analysed the transcript (Appendix D) for main research topics to pursue at a later date. After further reflection and prior to putting together an interview guide for individual interviews that would be based on the original transcript, I decided to offer again the opportunity for interviewees to listen to the tape and / or read the transcript. They were informed how they were allowed to delete sections or to qualify their remarks if they felt it necessary. Two interviewees requested to both listen and read; two requested only to read the transcript, while one never returned the letter of offer. No deletions or additions were made to the original transcript. However, had any additions or qualifications been made, from a research point of view it would have been interesting perhaps to probe interviewees as to why they had done so.

#### **4.9.2 Question types and strategies used**

The use of a Spradley (1979) 'grand tour' style opening produced a longer response than a more restrictive mini-tour one such as, 'Could you explain to me what you think the term 'feedback' refers to?' In order to get the interviewees to develop a point raised I reflected a statement back to them using phrases such as, 'A few moments ago you said X', or merely repeated their comments verbatim. Probing was at times necessary but I avoided a staccato interrogation with too many Wh- questions. On reflection, other means of more explicit follow-up questions may have been necessary.

Various types of questioning strategies were implemented in the group interview, including progressive focusing, during which the interviewees were asked questions which required increasingly more specific details in their responses. Also used were indirect questions, using lengthy, more oblique approaches, which contrast with the directness of "What's your view on X?" Whyte's (1984) list of six levels of directiveness were observed during the group interview. These ranged at the lowest form from an encouraging nod of the head up to the introduction of a completely new topic. In between where possible were reflection, probing the informant's previous remark, probing an idea from a previous turn but linked to the informant's prior statement, and probing an idea that was introduced earlier.

#### **4.9.3 Recording equipment issues**

Due to problems of inaudibility resulting from a recording made of the group interview using obtrusive and untrials equipment, I later borrowed a small

walkman-style voice recorder with an internal microphone in order to capture a clear account of the interaction and ensure transcript production would be less taxing. This less obtrusive technology proved ideal for small group exchanges around a table, and ensured analysis of the transcript at the individual interview stage would be dealing with a more accurate representation of what was said in terms of audibility. After production and analysis of the group interview transcript, and after gaining acceptance by all interviewees that the transcript was a fair representation, I identified emerging research topics for the individual interview stage.

By listening again with the borrowed technology described above, it was possible to identify previously inaudible sections of the group interview which would have enabled the addition of further detail or which identified matters that required further probing. After consideration, I decided that any such additions would not be necessary. Added data would be excessive and would almost certainly provide no further insight. The point to note here is that audibility levels of poor quality recordings may be enhanced when played on more refined technology. As 4.8.9 explains, for purposes of recording Stage Two conferences I invested in a digital voice recorder. On becoming familiar with this device and the potential for moving quickly around recordings copied onto the computer, the AR team, by then consisting of Ece and myself, were able to analyse transcripts by both listening and reading.

#### **4.10 Transcript analysis**

At this point transcribing the group interview was not for purposes of detailed conversation analysis, thus it needed no detailed examination other than identifying emerging research topics that I followed up in individual interviews. Also, based on analysis of transcripts, it was possible to identify topics and interviewees with whom to request follow-up interviews. As Eylem and Medine were clearly concerned about using a variety of methods, I believed probing their remarks in the transcript would prove useful in generating rich data. Their remarks concerning the various forms of providing feedback on students' writing, which included selective error-correction, written commentary and teacher-student conferencing, emerged as the focus in the follow-up interviews carried out. Other considerations included looking at the balance of talk and the richness of detail, and noting where topics were mistakenly closed down too early, whether turns may have been probed more and which points of action might be raised in later interviews.

Prior to follow-up individual interviews, I carried out a brief quantitative analysis of the transcript of the group interview. This revealed that of the ninety turns, the interviewer (myself) was responsible for thirty-eight of this total. This was caused by too many closed question types, requiring simply a yes/no response and perhaps sticking too rigidly to the pre-planned interview guide in order to get it all covered, rather than probing comments made in an attempt to open them up. Analysis of questions I put to interviewees revealed that thirty-two were 'wh'- type, which suggested far more emphasis on more

pluralistic questioning was required. On reflection such figures may have been useful to provide to teachers prior to conferencing.

#### **4.11 Group interview emerging topics: introduction**

I carried out a forty-five minute group interview with five teachers of writing at IYTE then analysed the transcript of the audio-recording of this interview for topics to pursue in follow-up individual interviews with selected teachers. Table 4a (below) illustrates four topics I decided to cover.

**Table 4a: emerging topics from the group interview**

Error correction
Teacher written commentary
Whole-class feedback
Teacher-student conferencing

Below, I have dealt with each of the emerging topics in table 4a and identified data from the transcript which indicated the potential for pursuing such matters with selected teachers during individual interviews. Details of feedback-related themes that did not arise in the group interview are summarised in 4.12.1 while those on individual interviews appear in 4.13.

##### **4.11.1 Error correction**

From the group interview transcript analysis it was clear that selective error correction using an established code (below also referred to as 'symbols') was clearly the most commonly used form of feedback provided by teachers in the writing department at IYTE. The reason for this was probably that local errors

are easier to locate and treat more quickly than the provision of comments on discourse and metadiscourse.

On the topic of what teachers did with completed students' essays, Nihat explained how he only read draft one in detail and corrected using symbols. He also stated, however, (Appendix D, turn 24) "I underline it and it shows something wrong", which suggests he both corrects using the code and hints at errors for learners to self-correct. When I probed him on the strengths and weaknesses of this method he explained how in the first part of the year his students had difficulty with understanding the correction code, how it took them time to get used to it and how in the second half he dispensed with the code and "I just underline without saying the mistake; they start getting used to my style." Nihat appeared to reduce the amount of guidance in his correction as the year continued. He felt selective correction could be recommended as, "It really helps students; after they learn, they do the corrections much more quicker; they understand what the problem is." He also pointed out how he read only draft one in detail and when dealing with a second draft and said "I just look at draft one, read my comments and just tick whether..." In turn 39 Nihat commented on how written feedback was useful for specific matters such as spelling mistakes, which supports the comments made at the beginning of this section on treatable errors. Questions I later put to Nihat in the individual interview concerned symbols he used for error correction and how he corrected writing using coded correction or comments or both.



Also on error correction, Ömer (turn 47) pointed out “I’m not correcting their mistakes; I just underline their mistakes and... some special symbols.” He felt “This technique makes them think about their mistakes and find out what is missing.” Ömer’s comments on the comparative values of error-correction and teacher-comments appear in 4.13.2.

Eylem, like Nihat, felt it was of little use to use symbols with beginners. “In the first term I just corrected their errors and now (referring to the middle of term two) I use symbols.” Ömer commented: “When they see so many symbols on their paper they look discouraged; they lose their confidence.” (turn 55). Medine stated in turn 56: “I try to do it (correction) in a different colour.”

Research topics until now suggested looking into why it should take so long for students at IYTE to get used to the teacher’s use of correction codes, along with how the current IYTE code was taught. Other possible points to pursue included how much long-term benefit Nihat and others felt error-correction had on student writing.

#### **4.11.2 Teacher written commentary**

Devrim used this method to provide encouragement: “I try to give confidence because some students only write because the teacher says.” (turn 27). In turn 29 she added, “Some students just look to see if it’s positive”. In the follow-up interview I asked her to explain how she gave confidence, and probed her comment that students only look for positives. I also asked her what counted as a positive comment and how such comments affect students.

Medine stated, “I really try to have something to say. I write what they are missing.” She felt some students were interested in this, and added, “I never say ‘bad’” (turn 47). Questions I later put to Medine concerned the meaning of her initial comment: “I write what they are missing”, along with evidence that students are interested in her comments and why only some students are interested.

Eylem commented on how she realised students did not like short comments, like “very good”. She felt these did not satisfy them as they prefer “comments about specific things”. Questions for Eylem at the individual interview included how and when she had realised this, along with what kind of comments satisfied students and on which areas of their work. A document analysis stage which for reasons of space I later removed from this chapter identified how perhaps Eylem’s feedback conflicted with this account, and to an extent exemplifies the point made by Sikes (2000:1) that it is vital to look at evidence of practice as well as self-report.

#### **4.11.3 Whole class feedback**

Nihat explained how in previous years he had provided pages of written feedback; sometimes in Turkish, the students’ mutual L1. Commenting on comments made by co-participants (turns 21-23) Nihat said, “This is ok on paper”, prior to explaining his method of providing whole class feedback. Nihat stated: “I write on the board common mistakes. I define their common mistakes with the whole class and this helps.” In turn 67 he again referred to this feedback method: “Common mistakes. I write them on the board. It helps

students a lot.” Nihat explained how he used general as well as individual feedback (turn 75). Nihat explained later during the individual interview (4.13.5.3) how whole class feedback compared with individual feedback and how he carried out the former.

#### **4.11.4 Teacher-student conferencing**

Of the five group interviewees, only Eylem and Medine appeared to conference with students. Eylem commented: “..one-to-one, in my room; I like to chat with each student.” (turn 25) and later added, “I think they like it very much.” She explained how she organised conferencing: “... in groups of four for five minutes. They were volunteers”, and added: “They really like to see that I’m interested in their progress; so individual feedback is important for them. When they want to talk to me about progress, they know they can come.” Eylem felt it was not important to see all the students or just the weakest. She added how she only did this in her office and not in the classroom.

Medine conferenced in a different format to Eylem as she did hers in the classroom when time was available at the end of the lesson. In turn 26 she states: “When lessons sometimes finish earlier, then they come next to me and we together read and assess their work.” Medine felt one-to-one and written feedback were both effective. In turn 81 she hinted that it was important not to do it for just one student, and pointed to a benefit of conferencing when she reiterated how it could be done while other students were working. Responding to my question of how to make conferencing more

effective, Medine explained: “First of all I can ask them their mistakes and what’s missing. I can ask them to think about their own mistakes. If they can’t answer I can ask some more questions.” This move from eliciting to questioning is further discussed in Stage One and Two conferencing and in more detail in 12.16, which concerns a comparison of conferencing styles. Also of interest here is how she leads conferences. When I asked about the effectiveness of conferencing, Medine replied: “One-to-one is more effective in the classroom because you can gather a few students together and read together.”

#### **4.11.5 Research possibilities**

Three types of oral feedback had emerged by now: whole class, small groups and one-to-one. My intended observation of teachers conferencing failed to transpire and was replaced by data gathering via recording conferences. Chapters five and six of this thesis outline the setting up and analysis of data from Stage One conferences, while chapters nine to twelve concern the preparation for and analysis of Stage Two conferences.

#### **4.12 Group interview findings**

A recurring issue in the analysis thus far was that a wide variety of combinations of feedback methods and reasoning behind each were used by the five teachers in the investigative study. I felt the reasons for the combinations required probing so during individual interviews in 4.13 I asked follow up questions to assess whether they were personality related issues, linked to time-management or implemented based upon sound pedagogical

thought. Overall findings from the group interview stage appear below in table 4b.

**Table 4b: detailed group interview findings**

<p><b>Error correction</b></p> <p>Selective error-correction dominates</p> <p>Guidance is gradually reduced</p> <p>Beginners require correct forms</p> <p>Initial student difficulty with error correction</p> <p>Correction symbols tend to discourage</p>	<p><b>Conferencing</b></p> <p>Carried out in groups of one to three</p> <p>Lasting five minutes</p> <p>Individual conferences preferred</p> <p>Not all students require conferences</p> <p>May take place in offices or classrooms</p> <p>May take place while others are writing</p>
<p><b>Teacher written comments</b></p> <p>Important to provide positive feedback</p> <p>Students find comments interesting</p> <p>Students prefer detailed feedback</p>	<p><b>Whole class feedback</b></p> <p>Teacher selects common errors</p> <p>Students work from errors on the board</p>

#### **4.12.1 Absent topics in the group interview**

Of interest was the apparent lack of use made by teachers of peer feedback, the advantages and disadvantages of which are outlined in 2.3.6-2.3.8. Also missing is using taped commentary to provide feedback. Research carried out in this area by Hedge (2007) is described in 2.3.9. Neither topic was raised via the interview guide and it is possible that teachers had either used such means and no longer felt it worthwhile, or had never considered their use. These previously not touched upon topics were raised in the individual interview stage. Other feedback methods not referred to, but dealt with in 2.3.10 and 2.3.11 respectively, included student self-evaluation and computer-mediated correction.

#### **4.13 Teacher individual interviews: introduction**

In the previous section I outlined the group interview. Following this I outlined and tabulated feedback-related topics I located in the transcript to pursue during individual interviews. This particular section focuses on those items which are related to providing feedback on student writing and explains the outcome of interviews with five teachers. As explained above, all members of the group interview were invited to read and add to or delete comments they made at the group interview which appeared in the transcript. No such changes were felt to be necessary and all agreed to participate in an individual interview. It should be noted that certain categories of emergent codes such as error correction and conferencing were not relevant to all participants.

##### **4.13.1 Devrim**

Although at the group interview large sections of comments made by Devrim proved on listening to the recording to be completely inaudible, the transcript indicated she pointed out and emphasised later how important it was to encourage student writers by providing them with confidence via positive teacher comments. I returned to this topic during the interview with her.

##### **4.13.1.1 Teacher commentary**

Before probing Devrim's comment concerning how she provided encouragement, I read back her previous remarks on this. Devrim provided encouragement with praise in her written comments, but also indicated how she added what she termed 'guidance'. Although she never directly criticised

student writing, hedged features in the form of suggestions were also present in her encouragement. Devrim believed negative comments discouraged student writers, and explained that students at IYTE were so interested in teacher comments on their work, and that teacher response was so eagerly awaited, since in no other course component there did students receive written feedback.

#### **4.13.1.2 Conferencing**

Although at the group interview Devrim did not appear to comment on teacher-student conferences, when I asked her thoughts on this she explained how she tended to use such a feedback method for various means but principally when dealing with portfolio assessment by working through students' files in the classroom with students next to her and explaining to them how she arrived at their grades. Devrim explained how she used this method with a single student and sometimes a group of three to go over a key area. When I asked her to compare conferencing and written comments, she explained how she believed written comments alone provided no sense of what she termed 'personal contact', something that the system in Turkey did not encourage, but she clearly felt conferencing was beneficial since she added how students 'enjoy being with the teacher'. She believed the most effective feedback would be a combination of both oral and visual types, and thus confirmed research in Hyland and Hyland (2006) that suggests the benefits of combinations of feedback. Along with comments made by both Eylem and Medine (4.11.4) there is thus further evidence here of how

students enjoy conferencing, along with how teachers intuitively believe in its value.

#### **4.13.2 Ömer**

##### **4.13.2.1 Error correction**

When I probed the comment he made in the group interview that rather than correcting mistakes he underlined and indicated them using symbols, Ömer explained how he felt students benefited greatly from this technique as it encouraged them both to study alone and to use a dictionary. Ömer provided examples from the previous year when he had supplied the correct form but realised this was not a help to the students; he had later moved onto thinking error-correction with symbols would be more effective. Working with students at beginner level, he noticed in second drafts what he termed 'unbelievable' improvements had taken place due to students' work on error repair.

##### **4.13.2.2 Teacher commentary**

On teacher comments, Ömer provided further evidence of his psychological approach to feedback on students' work when he explained how he felt he had to provide oral and written encouragement to prevent demotivation. Thus, teacher comments are used by Ömer to mitigate the effect of his perhaps indirectly discouraging error correction. He added that students required other means of feedback than error correction and explained how using symbols would not work as they do not address the students' feelings in the way that teacher comments do, and gave the example of a comment in the form of a suggestion on how to improve work. He clearly sees the value of such



comments and explained how sometimes students ‘scream with delight’ when they read his written praise.

#### **4.13.2.3 Conferencing**

Ömer explained how when the rest of the class was busy he invited students to his desk where he asked for clarification and discussed with them how to improve their work. Ömer believed each feedback method had its own value. He explained his view of the teacher as psychologist and added how, although dealing with students on an individual basis was useful, time constraints applied and added that if time were available to him for conferencing he would, “Write the essay from scratch”, dealing with the work sentence by sentence. Ömer thus saw conferencing as a form of collaboration in which, although teacher-led, he would elicit answers and induce self-correction.

My analysis of the transcripts of Ömer later conferencing with two students (6.3.3) reveals how he rarely encouraged student self-correction. At follow-up interviews Ömer realised this was an issue for him to work on in future conferencing, and also provided an early example of teacher-development in this study.

#### **4.13.3 Medine**

##### **4.13.3.1 Error correction**

Medine used stars to indicate error and explained how she used the correction code in a limited manner; with higher-level A and B groups at the

start of the year and only with C groups later. She felt all students started to remember the code after a while. Medine felt error correction alone was not enough and that talking to students was helpful as it provided greater understanding but time-constraints limited opportunities for this. Medine's attitude towards and method of conferencing are expanded upon in 4.13.3.3.

#### **4.13.3.2 Teacher commentary**

Hyland and Hyland (2006) state: "Many teachers feel they must write substantial comments on papers to provide a reader reaction to students' efforts." Medine perhaps partially reflected this point when she explained how she felt students expected to read comments about their work as well as see error correction. She gave examples orally of summative comments that suggested or warned about general error and also gave examples of the praise she provided such as, 'You're improving'. She believed that since students put a great deal of effort into their work they expected comments on it in 'concrete' remarks. The types she most used varied according to the student in question but felt such comments encouraged them to continue with their writing. There was also evidence of metaphor as when referring to student diaries Medine added how 'in the role of a trusted sister', she provided advice where necessary.

#### **4.13.3.3 Conferencing**

Medine used this as a central means of providing feedback. Although in her case it was generally carried out with groups, she occasionally did it with single students. Her style of conferencing was student-initiated: students who

had completed their work came to her desk. This was not always the most competent students and included those who wrote more quickly or completed shorter essays. It was often ad hoc, although she conferenced when she detected serious problems relating to several pieces of work, such as not enough points covered or recurring mistakes.

#### **4.13.3.4 Benefits of conferencing**

Medine felt conferencing was beneficial as students feel the teacher is showing extra interest in them and how this encourages and motivates them to write more. Other benefits included providing students with the opportunity to correct their work under the gaze of the teacher while Medine indicated the area of error, i.e. she elicited. Such student correction, she felt, did not occur when students were simply asked to read their work alone. This concern is supported by Hyland and Hyland (2006) who comment: "A problem with self-evaluation for many writers is the difficulty of reading one's own text with the critical detachment of an outside reader." One possible disadvantage she felt of conferencing was that students might detect favouritism. In contrast to others, Medine felt it was not time-consuming because it was taking place in classroom time.

Medine also indicated an alternate form of conferencing, carried out in her office only when necessary and in the mutual L1 (Turkish) and generally at the start of the year with students experiencing writing related problems such as a lack of motivation. If time could be made available for more conferencing in her office she said she would ideally look at previous essays and work with

students on problem areas detected and only send them away with further work if necessary. This form of conferencing perhaps combines the role of pastoral care and aiding the development of student writing skills. The potential of the use of the L1 in conferencing is discussed briefly in 6.4.8, and illustrated with further examples in 11.8.4.

#### **4.13.4 Eylem**

##### **4.13.4.1 Error-correction**

Eylem reiterated her point that students at lower levels do not fully comprehend the use by teachers of symbols, and supported this by adding how her students often questioned the meaning of such symbols. Eylem's point here is referred to by Ferris and Hedgcock (2005), concerning how "...lower proficiency students may be unable to identify and correct errors even when they have been marked for them." Eylem pointed out one of the major limitations of the use of symbols in error-correction: how the use of one symbol may not be enough to reveal the complete problem within a single error. Instead of using symbols, Eylem provided the correct form. As the academic year progressed Eylem introduced symbols and found them effective, but later reduced the level of guidance students received on error-correction. This contrasts with Nihat (4.13.5) who implemented both error correction and teacher commentary with his higher level classes.

##### **4.13.4.2 Teacher-commentary**

Eylem's opinions on this area are also previously documented in 4.11.2, the group interview transcript analysis. She generally wrote long comments on

students' work, comments that dealt with discourse features such as layout and organisation. Such comments were in the form of suggestions, polite imperatives ("Please pay attention to..") and praise, "I'm sure you'll be successful..". She was never critical as she felt this discouraged student writers. She felt students did not appreciate and were not satisfied by short comments such as 'Very good' as they indicated the teacher 'had not bothered to read their work' in sufficient detail. When I probed her on this point, Eylem felt comments which satisfied students were those with positive, constructive suggestions, but in her remark, "..of course you have some mistakes but.." hinted that mitigation was also employed. Mitigation is further discussed in 6.4.5.

#### **4.13.4.3 Value of error correction and teacher-commentary**

Although she believed longer teacher-comments were better, and should be placed at the end, Eylem felt symbols were useful for students to deal with local problems. She would never use just error-correction as, "I feel the need to say extra things, to praise them." She pointed out how it was not easy to find comments for very weak students; this was one of the reasons a list was circulated in the IYTE writing unit of ready-made teacher comments.

#### **4.13.4.4 Conferencing**

Eylem recommended conferencing: "not just for writing teachers". She realised its value when comparing two classes. With one she had successfully used this feedback method; with another class she had not done so until

much later, which was when they became more interested in both her lessons and her comments. She stated “(they) wanted to talk to me again”.

#### **4.13.4.5 Conferencing organisation**

Eylem’s conferencing was organised according to a weekly plan in which students voluntarily arranged a schedule; they came to her office to discuss general writing matters, such as the current essay. Eylem’s conferences were teacher-led and dealt with pedagogical matters concerning the writing course. Eylem encouraged students to be critical, although she added how they rarely suggested anything to discuss apart from their own problems with writing. In her office conferences Eylem never asked students to do any pre-conferencing work, but during the conference explained organisational and sentence level mistakes and ended by asking students to deal with work on a second draft. On the benefits of conferencing, Eylem felt it was interactive and aided development in both the short and long term. On drawbacks, she felt students tended to rely on conferencing too often rather than by making the effort themselves. All students in the same group, Eylem believed, should be invited to engage in conferences in order to avoid a feeling of favouritism that may emerge. Medine (4.13.3.4) had raised the same point. Eylem admitted students may at times find teacher oral comments “..complicated, so they may need to write it down.” This point supports work by Hedge (2007) on taping feedback for later listening. On the value of this compared with other forms of feedback, she felt conferencing was time consuming and explained how she ensured she saw each student once per term. In contrast, and providing evidence of teacher development, she also recommended it and arrived at

this method by trying out others first. Concerning conferencing in the classroom, Eylem dealt with a single piece of work in a one-to-one situation, used it for clarification and, like the others who used conferencing, with early finishers.

#### **4.13.5 Nihat**

##### **4.13.5.1 Error correction**

From the group interview it was apparent that Nihat used the correction code and also hinted at errors for students to work on. As the year progressed he reduced the amount of guidance and emphasis on the code. Nihat varied the form of feedback according to the class and his perceptions of their learning strategies. Referring to how teachers tailor feedback, Hyland and Hyland (2006) state: 'It may be ... what is effective for one student in one setting is less so in another At the start of the year Nihat provided a lot of feedback and extended the use of the correction code symbols with explanatory notes, which contrasted greatly with others in this study who made no use at all of the code at the start of the year. Paradoxically, he added how he did this to accustom students to the symbols and deliberately over-corrected students' early work in term one in order to warn students that such extensive red ink would reappear unless they engaged in self-correction as he believed student writers were capable of reducing their own errors "by at least fifty per-cent" due to such a method. Hyland and Hyland (2006) on such student self-evaluation disagree with this point, however. Nihat reduced the amount of guidance by removing symbols and merely underlined errors in order for students to make more effort. He believed students enjoyed this as it made

them think more but believed such an approach worked better with his A and B groups. Nihat thus contrasted strongly with Medine on self-correction. It should be pointed out, however, that unlike Eylem, Medine and Devrim, who tended to teach low-proficiency C groups, Nihat dealt with more proficient A groups. While the issue of the relationship between language level and feedback is not insignificant, I felt for the purposes of this study it was at this point not one to be pursued. The use of the L1, however, is exemplified in 11.8.4 and discussed in chapter thirteen.

#### **4.13.5.2 Teacher-commentary**

Nihat provided written commentary sometimes in the mutual L1 in order, he pointed out, to better express his irony which he felt his students both looked forward to reading and enjoyed. Whereas in recent years he provided lengthy commentary, he currently wrote less as he acknowledged how time-consuming it often was. When I asked his thoughts on short and long-term benefits of written comments, Nihat explained how students' second drafts 'become better' and how he felt students formed habits which make long-term progress become 'more likely'.

#### **4.13.5.3 Whole class feedback**

A key comment made by Nihat earlier in the interview was, "What I most like, and what I feel students most benefit from, is my taking out common errors from students' work and discussing this after putting them on the board." He compiled a list of common errors, usually four or five grammar points, for the class as a whole to discuss in order for them to identify problem areas. He felt



this feedback method was much more effective than any other as the class were all focused on the same point. No other teachers mentioned this feedback type. Such a feedback method is supported by Master (1995) in Hyland and Hyland (2006:84) who found that corrective feedback was effective when combined with classroom discussion.

#### **4.13.5.4 Peer correction**

Whereas Nihat in 4.13.5.3 believed in the value of self-correction, he was more sceptical of peer-correction which he felt did not provide positive results, as students with insufficient ability in English tended to break into their L1. This contradicted his point below about using the L1.

#### **4.13.5.5 Conferencing**

Nihat conferenced in the classroom where he called students on an ad hoc basis to go through their work. In his office his feedback was generally in the L1 “so they do not miss anything.” The topic of L1 use is further illustrated and discussed in 6.4.8 and 11.8.4. On taping comments, he felt it may be useful but believed students would not make the effort to use of it. Table 4c below summarises the above findings concerning the five main types of feedback covered.

**Table 4c: points arising from individual interviews**

<p><b>Conferencing</b></p> <p>Enables more personal feedback than others</p> <p>Is enjoyed by students</p> <p>Is more collaborative and interactive</p> <p>Is time-consuming</p> <p>May be both teacher or student initiated</p> <p>May be used for repairing serious writing issues</p> <p>May be of value to teachers of all other areas</p> <p>Is generally teacher-led</p> <p>Is improved when the L1 is used</p> <p>Should end with a request for a follow-up draft</p>	<p><b>Teacher written comments</b></p> <p>Include praise plus guidance</p> <p>Contain indirect criticism and hedging</p> <p>Are used to mitigate discouraging error correction</p> <p>Encourage students</p> <p>Are expected by students</p> <p>Need to vary according to student level</p> <p>Need to be explanatory, and perhaps in L1</p>
<p><b>Whole class feedback</b></p> <p>Usually involves four – five students</p> <p>Involves class discussion on selected points</p> <p>Felt to be effective</p>	<p><b>Error correction</b></p> <p>Encourage students to study alone / with a dictionary</p> <p>Appear to result in improvements on draft two</p> <p>Is useful for students at all levels</p> <p>May be more useful combined with conferencing</p> <p>Tends to confuse due to symbols</p> <p>May be better used only for local errors</p>
<p><b>Peer response</b></p> <p>Tends to revert to L1</p>	

#### **4.14 Identifying a research topic**

With the benefits of hindsight, the investigative study was unintentionally lengthy. It involved a focus on error correction which, being a huge area, I have necessarily simplified. From my observations during the group and individual interviews I felt there was an opportunity for teachers at IYTE to carry out research in order to assess the worth of providing feedback during conferences, an area my early reading in Hyland (2003) had led me to believe was a relatively unresearched method and one of potential value for both

teachers and students at IYTE. In particular I noted the possibility at IYTE for setting up and recording conferences with a view to analysing the effect of the conference on follow-up essay drafts. I was particularly interested in pursuing this focus after reading the following in Hyland and Hyland (2006: 186): 'Given how few studies have been carried out, little is known about the relationship between teacher and student discourse and teacher feedback in conferences and student revision. Virtually no research has looked at the interaction among context, student factors, and teacher factors and how such interactions influence conference feedback and revision'. As 2.4.8 in the literature review outlines, based on my reading of their work, I felt research posing similar questions to that by Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) would be possible and at the same time would perhaps provide insights into the question over what it is about conferences that affect the student revision process.

#### **4.15 Chapter summary**

This chapter, the investigative stage of Burns (2005), involving group and individual interviews and the location in a transcript of emerging research topics, explored teacher attitudes and action concerning the provision of feedback on students' written work. Although for reasons of space I have removed sections of this thesis which covered it, in order to get a more complete picture of events I also interviewed three selected students at IYTE and analysed their essays. The analysis revealed examples of error correction and written comments, which I categorised to assess how much of each was provided, and established how each was perceived by three students. From

data gathered from the investigative study I was able to identify that teacher feedback was a central component of the writing course at IYTE, and that students considered feedback valuable. The range, types and extent of feedback provided was clear, although what was not clear was the relative value each type had on writers' development. The need for further study was thus evident from several points brought out which indicated difficulties with current practice in providing feedback on students' essay writing in IYTE. By the end of the investigative study I had identified a research topic which would focus on oral conferencing.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Planning and Data Collection**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The main implication from the previous chapter, the exploring and identifying stage of Burns (2005), was that although a variety of methods were clearly used in order to provide feedback on essay writing in IYTE, only limited and varied use was made of conferencing. Based on implications outlined in 4.14 and 4.15, AR on the group case study described there and my role within this group as a change agent formed the next stage of this study.

This chapter consists of two further stages of the framework suggested by Burns (2005). It firstly provides an outline of the background to these stages, including details of the AR team and the development of relationships therein. It goes on to describe how the planning stage of Burns (2005), which concerned teacher, student, and writing task selection, was set up and implemented by myself and the team. Following this it explains how the next stage of the Burns (2005) framework, data collection, took place via recording teachers conferencing with students, although reflecting how Burns (2005) is not a model involving fixed stages, but one of interrelated practices, this study had already carried out a data collection phase in the investigative study.

This chapter looks in particular at key issues of transcribing arising during the production of six conferencing transcripts. Although I was not currently actively participating in Stage One conferencing, chapter eight explains

reasons for my increased involvement in Stage Two conferencing. Box 5a below indicates how the current stage of this study fits into the Burns (2005) framework.

**Box 5a: Burns (2005): planning and data collecting**

exploring → identifying → <b>planning</b> → <b>data collecting</b> → analysing / reflecting → hypothesising / speculating → intervening → observing → reporting → writing → presenting
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## **5.2 The action research change agent**

A research focus for the early part of this study was on how, by acting as a change agent, I could lead an AR team. At this point I believed it was the role of the change agent to act as 'knower', one who would set up Stage One conferencing, assess how successfully it had gone, and then, based on self-knowledge, train the team to perform better in Stage Two conferences. On reflection, as 5.3 and 5.8 indicate, I later felt this attempt to transfer knowledge reflected a lack of collaboration with the team, a feature which did not reflect the purpose or the ethos of an AR study. I therefore later attempted to establish a role that involved making sure everyone had a voice, while engaging in collaborative interventionist work, but without being prescriptive. This reflects Carr and Kemmis (1993:238), who state: 'In action research, all actors involved in the research process are equal participants and must be involved in every stage of the research. The focus thus became on how to set up and collaborate with the team in order to explain the study and discuss with them how we might continue. Data analysis in chapter six illustrates discussion on how improvements, where needed, could be made in our

mutual professional practice of conferencing on EAP writing at IYTE. Part B of chapter thirteen discusses issues of teacher knowledge and teacher development.

### **5.2.1 Conflicting roles**

This study involves AR on conferencing and looks firstly at the professional development of teachers comprising the AR team and also at my role as the change agent leading this team. In the first part of this study there was sometimes a conflict between my role as change agent, and thus leader among equals within an AR study, and my other role as coordinator of the IYTE writing unit. Such conflict was not unexpected, although finding ways to avoid it were not necessary at first as I was able to switch comfortably between both roles. This thesis later reflects how the dual roles began to conflict. 7.3 looks at this problematic issue and the consequences. How this issue impacted on the AR team and relationships is outlined in 8.2. Chapter eight explains my increased involvement in the study, during which, as I was also engaged in conferencing, my role became more of an equal among equals.

### **5.3 Background to conferencing**

Chapter four outlined the feedback provision in our teaching context and functioned as an information gathering stage. By engaging in AR, this study continued with setting up Stage One conferencing in order to explore the use of this feedback method by teachers of EAP writing in IYTE. An early personal aim was for the AR team to work on perspectives they might highlight from a

list of points (Appendix G) prepared by myself and based on notes taken from Hyland (2003:192-197). After discussion with the AR team (5.9) I provided this list of perspectives after the reflection stage and prior to Burns (2005) stage of hypothesising and speculating to discuss how we might proceed to Stage Two conferences.

#### **5.4 Teacher knowledge**

The issue of my providing teachers with information on how conferencing may proceed is in no way minor. It raises the question which lies at the heart of Johnson and Golombek (2002), referred to in Mann (2005), concerning the notion of what knowledge is, and who holds it. Quoting Richards (1998), Mann (2005: 106) points out how, 'What is clear is that knowledge is not in any simple way transferred from educators and trainers to teachers,' and quoting Roberts (1998) how, 'Knowledge is at least partly constructed through engagement with experience, reflection and collaboration On considering this, my intention in this study was from now on not to act as a transmitter of knowledge, but to work on the principles of Johnson and Golombek (2002: 3), quoted in Mann (2005: 106), who refer to a new view of teacher individual knowledge that they explain as 'an epistemology of practice that characterises teachers as legitimate knowers, producers of legitimate knowledge, and as capable of constructing and sustaining their own professional practice over time In this regard, it was an early example in this study of my own development as a researcher, while examples of construction of knowledge by AR team members are illustrated when, during analysis of transcripts, this resulted in the construction of desirable and undesirable conferencing



features (6.4) and, in chapter twelve, styles of conferencing. Further cases of teachers creating their own knowledge are outlined in chapters nine to twelve which illustrate refinements of thought on conferencing.

## **5.5 Planning for intervention**

The 'action' component of AR according to Burns (2005) 'Involves participants in a process of planned intervention, where concrete strategies, processes or activities are developed within the research context Exploring and identifying, stages one and two of Burns (2005) and illustrated in the previous chapter in box 4a, involved feeling my way into and refining the research topic. As these stages had already taken place during the investigative study, the study next moved onto stage three of Burns (2005) which involved developing an action plan for gathering data using a suitable means.

My intention was to work in collaboration with a small group of teachers in order to investigate how the conferencing currently being carried out on an ad hoc and unplanned basis might be improved by teachers reflecting on their work, and constructing and reconstructing their own principles with which to do so. This meant setting up and recording Stage One conferencing, prior to which I felt teachers should each select two students from their own classes with whom to conference. Although I did not discuss the figure with the current team I believed sufficient data would be generated from the resulting six transcripts. On reflection, it would not have been a problem to have at least raised the issue, and would have added to the collaborative nature of AR.

### **5.5.1 Teacher selection and availability**

My initial aim was to set up a group of at least three teachers of writing for the AR team. I felt teachers dealing only with elementary level writers should not be invited to participate in the research as the data generated by their learners, currently of limited oral proficiency, would prove of little use as their language would not exceed utterances at word or phrase level. As chapters nine to twelve illustrate, during Stage Two conferencing the team faced the same issue, one which was in fact adequately managed.

The number of teachers currently at IYTE dealing with pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, and which I felt currently to be potential team members, was a maximum of five. Due to maternity leave, timetabling and new posts, of the five who had formed the case study group and were involved in both group and individual interviews (4.9 and 4.13), only two were currently available for and willing to participate in the planning and data collection stages. These were Ömer and Nihat, both doctoral students with universities in Turkey, and thus familiar with the pressure involved with research issues such as the need for data-generation. On reflection, I felt two AR team members was unsuitable on the grounds that the departure of one might make what I believed would be an adequate amount of qualitative data difficult to obtain.

### **5.5.2 Issues of inviting participation**

In order to increase teacher involvement, I invited a further two colleagues to participate in the data generating stage: Seda and Nazli. Seda, who had had

previous experience of teaching EAP writing (but was unavailable for the case study interview due to maternity leave) declined on grounds of prior commitments. Nazli, new to teaching EAP writing, also declined the invitation for the same reason. I later felt that the letter of invitation (subsequently lost) whilst clear, was possibly too formal. For this reason, I had an informal follow-up discussion with Seda in which I assured her that involvement when it encroached on her time would be matched by my assistance with work-related aspects such as reading her students' essays. Following this discussion Seda agreed to participate but politely declined my offer. Although grateful to Seda for her participation, for the remainder of the study, I was careful not to impose on her. This was, I believed, appreciated and reciprocated by her continued interest in conferencing Stages One and Two.

### **5.5.3 Diary reflections**

My research diary records for this time reveal how It is interesting to note three points in reference to 5.5.1 and 5.5.2. Firstly, Stage Two conferencing took place successfully with C group students, who I had previously believed were less linguistically capable than the A and B group students who participated in Stage One conferencing. Secondly, and due to circumstances unforeseen at the time, Ömer and Nihat, as explained in 8.2 and 8.6 respectively, took no further part in this study beyond reflecting on their Stage One conferences. As a consequence of this a further letter of invitation (Appendix I) was necessary to find replacements. The issue of inviting participation in a research study is also discussed in 8.3 and 8.4. Thirdly, as

11.2 explains, after lengthy involvement, due to pressures of work, Seda withdrew from the study.

## **5.6 Team relationships**

At this stage the AR team comprised three colleagues who had each taught in an EAP context at IYTE for between five and ten years and had shared classes on several occasions, both with each other and myself. Although Nihat and Ömer were close friends, they also shared an interest in research as both were currently engaged in writing up their doctoral theses. Seda, along with a full teaching timetable, was also involved in the IYTE testing and assessment unit. Thus, while Seda (married mother of a young child) was clearly pressed for time and had only agreed to participate in the study after I overcame her initial reluctance, Nihat (single male) and Ömer (married with no children) were currently, I then believed, potentially more able to fit the requirements of this study into their working and personal lives. These proved to be false assumptions. It was thus interesting to note how the degree of participation of Ömer and Nihat later declined, while in contrast Seda's involvement, until a certain point proved constant.

## **5.7 Student selection issues**

Criteria to apply when selecting student writers with whom to carry out Stage One conferences was a key issue for the current team. Since at that time the AR team and I believed conferencing should involve dialogue in only the writers' L2, not inviting more reticent students or orally less able student writers was an issue. Chapter nine, however, outlines how based on twelve

points in 6.4 arising from the data analysis in 6.3, the team were able to conduct Stage Two conferences with students at a theoretically linguistically lower level, and in the case of Seda and Ece (a new team member for Stage Two conferencing) make use of both the students' L1 and English. The use of L1 is further discussed in 11.8.4. The student writers involved in Stage One conferencing were, prior to the decision on the writing task, selected by each of the teachers from their own separate writing classes. Priority was given by both Ömer and Nihat to students they believed were sufficiently highly motivated, linguistically capable and confident enough of discussing aspects of their writing on a one-to-one basis in English while being recorded doing so. Seda selected two who she believed would be able to converse in English about their writing and also who she felt would provide in their answers what she termed 'good data' for this study. Seda thus planned at the outset to make her Stage One conferences interactive and revealed early signs of both taking the lead in the study and being proactive. It is interesting to compare this criteria for selection with how, for her Stage Two conferences (8.8), Seda delayed her choice of students until she had read essays written by the whole group.

It is worth noting how at this stage of the study requesting permission from students selected was not felt to be an issue. On reflection, more care might have been taken in this matter, and only became a consideration following Stage Two conferencing.

## **5.8 Writing task selection**

The next step in the planning stage of Burns (2005) involved choosing which piece of work team members would feed back on. Although all students were from approximately the same level (intermediate) the team felt that, for purposes of comparison, the students should be provided with feedback on the same task. This point was raised by Ömer, indicating how he, too, was also taking a degree of responsibility. Conferencing on the same essay topic would enable an analysis of whether and to what extent any alterations or improvements in the follow-up draft had taken place as a result of the feedback given during conferencing. Not wishing to impose my own researcher perspective, I was keen to allow him to decide what to do. Another indication of teachers taking responsibility came from Seda who suggested the work to feed back on should be in the form of guided writing.

The final choice for a writing task was a process essay, a current course component, in which students were asked to describe the procedure for getting connected to the internet. The choice for this topic was made by the AR team acting independently. In this respect the three members of the study were currently working in close collaboration.

## **5.9 Teacher perspectives on conferencing**

A key issue of my own at this period of the study concerned providing an outline of the perspectives from which the conferences would be evaluated whilst enabling team members to consider how to conduct conferences. Although I did not wish to provide too much direction or guidance, as

mentioned in 5.3, I had originally planned to give notes based on Hyland (2003) (Appendix G) to team members for study-related reading which I felt would add an early professional development aspect. I therefore asked the group individually whether they would appreciate information on conferencing prior to the intervention stage.

Reflecting their own thoughts on the transmission model of knowledge (5.4), Nihat felt it would be, as he put it, “more natural” to carry out the Stage One conferences and only then, after an evaluation, receive details on aspects they might explore. Seda felt that being provided with details would make the first intervention more guided. She was, however, keen to go along with the wishes of Nihat and later talked to him about how to proceed during her Stage One conference. Seda also expressed doubt as to whether during conferencing students would provide data of sufficient richness for what she termed ‘your project’, a comment which perhaps reflected her current view concerning participation. In fact, Seda’s use of ‘your’ was possibly an early indication of how she had positioned herself in relation to the study. As mentioned earlier (5.5.3), this thesis explains in 11.2 how she would later feel obliged to leave.

On reflection, providing details and guidance may have led to Stage One conferences being more streamlined, especially with regard to teacher-student interaction, and would have resulted in saving research time and energy we expended on producing what became lengthy Stage One conferencing transcripts. Initially, though, I felt it would not have provided a

true indication of what occurs when, without input based on studies such as this, teachers sit down with students to discuss their writing. On further reflection I might have suggested, again in order to save us all time producing transcripts, teachers devote an amount of individual conferencing time commensurate with the total number of students in the group. Prior to Stage Two conferences I suggested this. Ece responded with a shorter second conference, although Seda, whose two conferences once again lasted more than fifteen minutes, did not. As indicated on page 2, the appendices have been shortened, although a complete copy is available should it be required.

#### **5.10 Data collection**

Stage One conferences involving three teachers, each with two students, took place as planned. This performed the fourth stage of Burns (2005) framework. Technical measures taken at the group (4.9) and individual (4.13) interview stage were once again applied, whilst also borne in mind were ethical issues related to recording, such as permission to do so, along with access to and use of data by others.

#### **5.11 Transcribing: introduction**

Although I believed producing a transcript in order to locate topics for further discussion during group and individual interviews had been relatively unproblematic, now reflecting an early realisation that transcript production involved greater complexity, I felt the current phase of this study required a greater degree of sensitivity. This belief was due to the fact that I had come to



realise how interviews are constructed encounters, and aspects of delivery might have a bearing on subsequent interpretations.

As this stage concerned an analysis of Stage One conferences, I devoted more time to listening to the recordings and editing the transcripts. Bearing in mind that no transcript is ever 'final' and that any text should be treated as a transcriber's best effort to represent the recorded exchanges in a way most appropriate to the claims that will be made on the basis of them, these transcripts can be regarded as a faithful representation. Issues arising in connection with representation are discussed below, while category coding the transcripts is dealt with in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.

#### **5.11.1 Missing features**

Although the transcription process has the advantage of allowing the researcher to get to know the data, the process also involves the possible loss of several features, especially non-verbal, such as body language in the form of gestures. In this study involving conferencing, from close listening to the recordings it is clear that on several occasions teachers indicated, but without verbalising this move, sections of essays they wished to focus on. Although I have attempted to illustrate emotional tones by what Dörnyei (2007: 246) terms 'relevant intonational contours,' suprasegmentals, such as stress and intonation, and paralinguistic factors such as grunts, do not appear in Stage One or Stage Two conference transcripts. As far as possible I have attempted in all transcripts to represent imperfect speech (including spoken errors by teachers and students) in a reasonable manner which does not humiliate

participants. For example, when a teacher spoke ungrammatically, I corrected it for the transcript.

### **5.11.2 Researcher development**

It is interesting to note how, when revisiting Stage One conferencing data, I had written up what was said. On re-listening and re-reading, it was noticeable how the text had been sanitised and appeared to read as a theatre script, with punctuation forms added. Also noticeable on the recordings for Stage One conferencing data were repetitions that had not been included in the transcript, along with pauses and rephrasing not inserted. The absence of pauses became an issue during the initial analysis stage (6.3) when Ömer explained how he felt such features had enabled his conferences to become more interactive. In fact, as a result of his raising this point I was obliged to revisit his Stage One conferences. 6.4.9 illustrates the importance of pausing while conferencing.

As the transcription of Stage Two conferencing is more refined than that for Stage One, the contrasting styles indicate how I developed as a researcher throughout this study in terms of how I represent things. It also indicates how transcription is something that is never complete and continues to change as researchers develop as transcribers. Apart from the example of Ömer's analysis, rather than re-transcribing and re-analysing Stage One data, I have left it as it was.

### **5.12 Interpreting data**

Dörnyei (2007: 247) points out that since spoken and written language are structured differently, 'every transcription convention we use will affect the interpretation of the data' and thus different conventions may result in different effects on the reader. Quoting Lapadat (2000), who emphasizes how a transcript is an interpretive 're-telling' of the original communication, and Roberts (1997:168), who comments how 'transcribers bring their own language ideology to the task', Dörnyei (ibid) states, '..all transcription is representation, and there is no natural or objective way in which talk can be written', and that 'No matter how accurate and elaborate a transcript is, it will never capture the reality of the recorded situation Quoting Miller and Crabtree (1999:104), Dörnyei adds (ibid), (Transcriptions are) 'frozen interpretive constructs

A further point made by Roberts (1997:167), who states, 'As transcribers fix the fleeting moment of words as marks on the page, they call up the social roles and relations constituted in language and rely on their own social evaluations of speech in deciding how to write it', is that as there is no objective way and no natural mechanism for representing speech. The more complex the data, the more reduction there tends to be, and thus more decisions to be made on what to include. Roberts (1997:170) concludes: 'As transcribers, we need to manage the tension between accuracy, readability, and representation – remembering that we are transcribing people when we transcribe talk

In relation to the possibility of producing an objective transcript, Green, Franquiz and Dixon (1997: 172) point out how 'transcribing is a situated act within a study or a program of research embedded in a conceptual ecology of a discipline. Further pointing out how transcribing is both an interpretive and a representational process, they explain how a transcript "re"-presents an event, but is not the event itself, and thus what is represented is, instead of being merely talk written down, in fact data constructed by the researcher for a particular purpose.

#### **5.12.1 Research questions**

Outlining the concept of 'fitness for purpose', Richards (2003:199) points out how opinions differ on whether or not to produce a transcript with specific research questions or hypotheses in mind. Green et al (1997:172) also point out how a transcript '(reflects a) researcher's conceptualisation of a phenomenon. Although the standard advice is to put such issues to the back of one's mind, Ochs (79:44), for example, suggests the opposite may be more practical. By transcribing the whole of each of the six Stage One conferences the intention in this study was to by-pass the issue of being as non-selective as possible. Richards mentions (ibid) how in spite of immense care taken, what he terms 'subtle influences' may inevitably but subconsciously affect the final version. In contrast, while not consciously prejudging the outcome of the analysis, I felt the final versions of the six transcripts reflected the degree of delicacy required by this stage of the study in order to enable categorisation and analysis of the discourse within the categories.

### **5.12.2 Adequacy and accuracy**

Two other points Richards (ibid) outlines in relation to the production of transcripts concern adequacy and accuracy. Oversimplifying the transcript may result in the absence of adequate details. Apart from pauses, previously mentioned in 5.11.2, also missing from Stage One transcripts, are indications of Seda's speed of diction (heard on the recording), which perhaps had an effect on student participation during her conferences, and Ömer's nod of the head in agreement with Gökhan (self-reported in later discussion), the absence of which led me to believe he had simply ignored him. In contrast, with regard to accuracy, the inclusion of all possible details might unwittingly confuse matters and would certainly devour valuable research time.

#### **5.12.2.1 Realism or constructivism**

As this study draws on some of the analytical tools of conversation analysis, e.g. the importance of pauses in conferencing (6.3.3.3), I feel the following points made by Ashmore and Reed (2000) apply. They describe how in the literature the recording and the transcript are 'accorded different treatment. Using extracts on transcribing taken from the work of other researchers, they outline on a continuum how the tape ranges from being regarded as a 'realist' object and the transcript as a 'constructivist' object. They quote firstly ten Have (1999) who, in support of the use of transcripts, states: 'It is the activity of transcribing the tapes that... captures the data. At the other extreme, and clearly much less sympathetic towards transcripts, they quote Carroll (2000), who argues: '...from bitter personal experience I have learned never to trust a transcript too much. He goes on to explain how transcripts may be: '...too

crude for our analytic purposes – a hopeless attempt to fix on paper what is, in its deepest sense, dynamic Ashmore and Reed (2000) also argue that the ontology and epistemology of the tape and transcript are changed by what they describe as ‘nostalgic revisiting’ of each of the latter.

### **5.13 Implications**

It became clearer to me after Stage One conferencing that recordings supported by video evidence would have enabled a greater degree of clarity, especially in terms of gestures such as indications by participants on areas of the text in question. Unfortunately this technology was not available at the time, but for future researchers in this area I would certainly recommend its use.

What also became clear is that constant revisiting also reveals nuances that may lead the study in various directions. As they may be more objective, along with member-checking, I found it helpful to ask others not involved in the study to listen and check the transcript against my own interpretation. Although there is also the possibility of researchers asking others to transcribe for them, this is not unproblematic, as issues outlined in 5.11.3 involving interpretation still exist.

### **5.14 Preparation for analysis**

I provided transcripts of their conferences to each member of the team, both for member checking to validate the transcript and for analysis. In total the transcripts, lasting 45 minutes overall, took above 40 hours to complete to the

standard indicated in 5.12.1-5.12.2. I also collected first drafts of student writing that were the topic of the Stage One conference, along with follow up drafts that were based on the feedback provided in the initial conference. I later gave copies of these to each member in order for them to analyse and identify how they felt their feedback during conferencing was related to revisions in the follow-up draft. The outcome of their individual analysis with my presence is outlined in 6.3. Also requested, but only by Seda, were transcripts of conferences by Nihat and Ömer in order for her to compare and contrast her own and others' styles, and to perhaps find points to pursue. From these Seda had noted features that reflected her own approach to matters, which was an early indication of her constructing a personal approach to conferencing, further constructed during Stage Two conferencing.

### **5.15 Chapter summary and preview**

This chapter, which represents the planning and data gathering stages of the framework suggested by Burns (2005), has outlined how the AR team and I myself set up and implemented six Stage One conferences. The chapter has looked at issues of selecting students and teachers for a study, along with the potential for research to enable the creation of new knowledge by teachers. It has also looked at issues concerning transcription. The following chapter looks at the next stage of Burns' (2005) framework, that of analysing / reflecting. It concerns the current AR team members' and my own analyses of the transcripts resulting from Stage One conferences.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Analysing / Reflecting: MCA One**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter looked at the planning and data collection stages of Burns (2005). This chapter, as box 6a (below) illustrates, is based on stage five of the framework provided by Burns (2005) involving analysing / reflecting. It outlines how the six transcripts resulting from Stage One conferences were analysed by myself and individual members of the current AR team in order to understand both what had taken place plus how to proceed in Stage Two conferencing. As such, it represents the initial analysis in this study, following which we noted how mini-cycles of analysis (MCA) appear, each representing a phase in the study marked by alterations in approach towards data analysis. Later chapters expand upon the notion of developing MCAs, while 13.2.2a summarises what happened in each MCA.

6.1.1-6.1.3 explain why there was a pause in this study. Following this is a section explaining category coding, the initial process by which the transcripts were analysed. The section after that (6.3) outlines how by means of collaborative discussion and analyses with three teachers, and using a model based on Boyatzis (1998), they and I reflected on the data. This enabled us to continue constructing a view on conferencing. A key feature of this section is the recognition, illustrated by data, of aspects of the discourse within the categories relating to what the team at this point perceived as 'success' and 'limitations' of conferencing. These aspects were designated by members of



the team and myself as what we perceived as desirable and undesirable features of conferencing. This chapter ends with a list in 6.4 of these features that the AR team for Stage Two conferencing were provided with.

**Box 6a: Burns (2005): analysing / reflecting**

exploring → identifying → planning → data collecting → **analysing / reflecting** → hypothesising / speculating → intervening → observing → reporting → writing → presenting

**6.1.1 A research pause**

At this point progress in this study was halted for one month after completing work on the six transcripts which were the outcome of Stage One conferences involving three AR team members and two of their students. This planned pause, which coincided with the mid-year break, was due to two unrelated events. Neither appeared to be detrimental to the study and, although they slowed it down, they may have enhanced its development in that a period for reading and reflection was created.

**6.1.2 Faculty relocation**

My diary entries also revealed how the first reason for the pause was that the IYTE foreign languages faculty premises, in which research for this study had till then taken place, was in the process of relocating fifty kilometres outside the city. This involved all teachers packing teaching material, taking paid leave and then returning to settle into completely new offices in unfamiliar premises. For almost all teachers it involved new classes. For many this also involved new teaching schedules with, for the remainder of the academic

year, and in order to counter travel-fatigue, an unofficial day off per week. This had the potential for difficulty in arranging research related meetings, or in making it much less convenient than was previously the case. In years following this, though, this unapproved day off was removed by IYTE administrators, thus making contact with the AR team a relatively easier process.

### **6.1.3 Relocation: the action research team**

Although I was in brief but regular contact with them, I felt it better, at least for the first few weeks after the new semester began, to avoid arranging meetings or having research related discussions with members of the AR team until the new semester in the new premises was well underway. My initial enquiry revealed, however, that Ömer, one of the team involved in Stage One conferencing, now had no classes for EAP writing and instead had requested an extra EAP reading class to assist his own doctoral studies. Another member of the team, Seda, continued with the same class. She had, however, initially lost this class, but for her own personal reasons that were not related to this study had requested its return. Nihat, the third member, had lost the class with which he had carried out Stage One conferencing but continued with other EAP writing classes with whom he could perhaps engage in a second stage.

Such changes in class and teacher were currently typical of IYTE. Prior to Stage Two conferencing I addressed this issue directly during a discussion with the Director of studies at IYTE at that time. Although I was promised that

teachers involved in AR would be given priority with regard to not having classes taken from them, only in the short term did I notice this was the case. On reflection, in practice, I realised how my request appeared not to be taken into consideration. It was also interesting to note later, how in 5.5.1 – 5.5.3 I had believed having two doctoral students in the current AR team would perhaps enhance the study, and how I had perhaps felt Seda would be more pressed for time. The opposite became the case as firstly Ömer and Nihat withdrew from the study to focus on writing up their own theses, while later they both left IYTE for employment elsewhere. Thus of the current AR team, only Seda was able to remain as a key member of the study. Such limitations as these illustrate are discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

#### **6.1.4 Seminars for teachers**

The second event which contributed to the pause mentioned above (6.1.1), and also noted in my on-going research diary, concerned my participation in a seminar tour of the UAE involving my attending TESOL Arabia 2007 in Dubai at which I gave talks on this study. I had been asked several months prior to this event by Cambridge ESOL, a UK examinations board, to visit the UAE in order to talk to groups of teachers in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi and Dubai on how to improve candidate performance on the writing paper of the Preliminary English Test (PET), an exam produced by Cambridge ESOL. Preparation for the three seminars and two conference talks proved extremely time-consuming. However, since one of the talks was related to this study, it proved to be a useful reminder of work carried out in terms of summarising our study thus far. It was also helpful in terms of having to analyse and

explain to an informed audience features appearing in the Stage One conference transcripts.

## **6.2 Category coding**

Following the above pause, this study next involved an analysis of the transcripts using a coded category approach to the data. Initial coding took place to identify points which current members of the team individually felt conferencing was beneficial to student writers or otherwise, i.e. what they perceived as desirable and undesirable features. For logistical reasons mentioned in 6.1.2 and 6.1.3, it was not easy to arrange a time when the whole team were free to analyse their own as well as each other's conference transcripts. I was therefore obliged to work individually with each of the team members in order for us to categorise features we located in our joint analysis of the transcripts. This period of the study illustrated a high degree of collaboration on the part of myself and members of the team. At the same time a similarly high degree of practical orientation of the categorisation was also evident in the sense of detecting whether or not the features identified were desirable or otherwise.

### **6.2.1 Adapting Boyatzis (1998)**

Based on my current research reading, I felt work carried out by Boyatzis (1998) would enable our study to proceed satisfactorily. Individual teachers and I analysed and coded the transcripts based on Boyatzis (1998) who, in order to develop themes and a code, used a data-driven (inductive) approach. Basing our work at this point on Boyatzis (1998) offered a way into

categorising the data. It enabled us to adapt his continuum of typical-superior characteristics to our two categories which, as 6.2.2 explains, later became a list of what the team designated as their perceptions of desirable and undesirable features of conferencing.

Joint analyses carried out by the team and myself followed steps outlined in stage two of Boyatzis (1998). The raw data was reduced to units that enabled comparison, i.e. transcripts of each of the Stage One conferences were written up. The following step involved 'identifying themes within the sub-sample and aiming to sense and articulate potential themes present in the sub-sets based on the data', which for this study represented the whole sample of six transcripts.

Prior to this point I had originally requested teachers to code the transcripts from their own conferences. As mentioned above, due to logistical reasons and time constraints I later felt it better to work with each teacher on transcripts of their particular conferences. This was both advantageous and disadvantageous; it allowed individual members and myself to focus closely on their own work, but at the same time it did not enable members to directly discuss each other's findings in my presence. I later offered each team member the opportunity to examine data from transcripts other than their own and, as a result, Seda requested and was given those of Ömer and Nihat.

It is important to note a contrast here between this stage of our study and Boyatzis (1998); whereas Boyatzis (1998) involved life story narratives, in

which managers were talking about themselves rather than doing the work of management, this study involved teachers at work, not talking about themselves.

6.3 illustrates how the collaborative analyses were carried out, and discusses categories noted. Step three of Boyatzis (1998) involves comparing themes across sub-samples in order to seek thematic relationships that may be polar opposites or involve similar phenomenon. One example of this step in this thesis is how teachers provided praise (6.3.1.2, 6.3.2.1, 6.3.3.1, 6.3.5.2). Steps four and five, the final two steps of stage two in Boyatzis (1998) involve creating a code by reviewing the list of themes and distinguishing between them, and then determining the reliability of the code. Although stage four is illustrated by the list of desirable and undesirable features in 6.4, stage five was not implemented as I felt determining the reliability was not a necessary element in this study.

### **6.2.2 Category development**

For the analysis of each of the transcripts in 6.3 I initially asked teachers to work individually on identifying categories. I also analysed the transcripts and met with each teacher to discuss our respective findings. The categories arrived at during our collaborative analyses were loosely based on those in Boyatzis (1998). As 6.4 illustrates, in place of a continuum, the AR team adapted the Boyatzis (1998) model so that at the end of Stage One conferencing analyses we were able to list features we felt were desirable and

undesirable in terms of assisting student writers prior to, during and following conferencing on their work.

Teacher interviews (6.3) explain this in more detail, but the outcome was basically as follows: discourse features of two overall categories of teacher oral feedback were located. The first concerned features in the conferences which we believed had had a positive impact on the second draft of the students' writing, while the second concerned features which we believed had had a limited or negative affect on the same draft. Points noted as desirable or undesirable conferencing features are listed together in sections appearing after analyses of each transcript with individual team members: i.e. in 6.3.1.4, 6.3.2.4, 6.3.3.8, 6.3.4.4, 6.3.5.8 and 6.3.6. These features, which are summarised in the final section of this chapter (6.4), formed the basis of points to work on in constructing versions of oral feedback which were carried forward to Stage Two conferencing.

### **6.2.3 Positioning the study**

This study involved working with teachers to get them to identify categories and then using this categorisation as a heuristic device, a way of opening up an understanding of what they had been doing in their conferencing feedback. That is to say, the categorisation was a step in a bigger process that, by getting teachers to identify the categories, provided them with a way into the data that they could understand, and which structured our interaction as part of our teacher-development. In regard to the latter point, this study offers

insights into shared categorisation and what it can lead to in terms of mutual understanding.

### **6.3 Stage one conference transcript analysis: introduction**

The transcripts referred to throughout the remainder of this chapter were the outcome of my own personal listening and editing. They contrast well with transcripts resulting from Stage Two conferencing which, although again I did most of the listening and editing, were put together more collaboratively and included checking for accuracy by all teachers involved. This is another indication of how, as a researcher, I realised the importance of collaboration within AR (although doing things by myself certainly saved time). It is interesting to note, too, how for Stage One conferencing I was doing more, both for and with the AR team. For Stage Two conferencing I realised the value of allowing team members to work individually, although later chapters in this study explain reasons for and illustrate a return to collaboration.

#### **6.3.1 Nihat conference one: Buğra**

Nihat carried out his Stage One conferences in his office with both students present. He had annotated the original drafts prior to the conference, during which he dealt with most but not all points. As Appendix F illustrates, the conference was in effect one long turn; Buğra's contribution was only minimal. During our collaborative analysis of the transcript Nihat and I located the following categories: praise; teacher-locate, teacher-correct; not all possible points noticed; surface-global move; unclear feedback (on style); request to write a follow-up draft; thanks. From this list we felt aspects of error-



correction, praise and style revealed points worth noting for teachers engaging in Stage Two conferencing. These points are outlined below in 6.3.1.1 - 6.3.1.3, while 6.3.14 summarises these three aspects.

#### **6.3.1.1 Error correction**

As noted above, instead of eliciting, Nihat had already identified and corrected most errors on the student's paper; such annotated drafts are further discussed in the final chapter concerning the limitations of this study. Nihat dealt with four local grammar errors, each of which he repaired with explanations. In the first example (extract one, below) although he had indicated the error by underlining it on the student's essay, but without actually correcting it, he still chose to explain rather than elicit the correct form. Both examples are taken from Appendix F.

##### ***Extract 1: turn one***

<p><b><i>Nihat:</i></b> <i>one of them is this word, "any kinds of information". Instead of "kinds" you should use "kind of information" here</i></p>
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Extract two, in which Nihat had identified and corrected an error on the student's work, exemplifies again the teacher-locate - teacher-correct pattern. Such correction we observed may in fact take place without conferencing. As a result, Nihat and I felt this was a feature that should be avoided in Stage Two conferencing.

**Extract 2: turn one**

**Nihat** *Right, and another minor problem here; we use “another” before singular nouns but here you use it with “another programmes” so it should be “other programmes” or “another programme.”*

**6.3.1.2 Praise**

Although he clearly felt the writing was successful, Nihat twice praised the work in general without doing so specifically, but then in extract three, with ‘*but still*’ in the first example and ‘*but I would like to say something*’ (extract four) focused on surface errors. This, which Hyland and Hyland (2001) refer to as ‘sugaring the pill’ Nihat termed a ‘softening the blow’ move, or a mitigation feature.

**Extract 3: turn one**

**Nihat:** *Ah, now, on the whole, to tell the truth, you have very good English. It’s good work but still you have some minor problems.*

**Extract 4: turn three**

**Nihat:** *Right. As I said, on the whole, it is very good work but I would like to say something about your style.*

Extracts three and four illustrate praise followed by mitigation features. In the first we see two examples of praise and, in the second, one. Each is followed by ‘but’, indicating to the student there is criticism on the way. Nihat felt such discourse features were necessary in conferences as they would encourage the writer prior to hearing criticism. He also felt the features of praise followed

by criticism should not be reversed. He felt such mitigation features should be considered a desirable feature of Stage Two conferencing. In a later analysis I noted that extracts six and seven (6.3.2.1) indicate how Nihat provides a slight variation on his praise-mitigation discourse.

#### **6.3.1.3 Style**

Moving onto more global writing matters, and indicating a point where we have something almost heuristic and which goes beyond conventional coding, Nihat, in the extract below noted how he explained the student's problem of style in relation to the use of imperatives and full sentences, adding that an example would have helped clarify.

#### ***Extract 5: turn eleven***

*Er, sometimes you use imperative sentences and sometimes you use full sentences when you are giving instructions. Right. But try to choose either of them; not both of them. Especially in a paragraph, you start with a full sentence; the second sentence goes on with an imperative, er, and on the whole the style changes, it means. Right. Try to be more consistent about this.*

Although Buğra had clearly understood and acted on the local errors, Nihat felt that perhaps he did not follow the point on style since he had not acted on this in his second draft and noted that this was possibly due to his unclear feedback during conferencing. Nihat felt providing examples of what he had meant would have assisted in this conference. The latter point is further evidence in support of 6.4.6, which outlines the value of providing examples.

#### **6.3.1.4 Desirable / undesirable conferencing features**

Data in 6.3.3.1 indicating error correction shows that the pattern of teacher-locate – teacher-correct is an unnecessary and therefore undesirable feature of oral conferencing. Instead, teacher (or student) location on the first draft, and student correct on the follow-up draft would be more desirable feature. A second point in relation to this extract concerned how Nihat felt that instead of being categorical and using the phrase 'It should be', it would be more desirable in future conferencing to ask 'What should it be?' Nihat and I felt the use of mitigation features when praising students' work was a helpful and thus desirable feature, one which should be encouraged in Stage Two conferencing. The possibility of unclear feedback illustrated by extract five led us to believe the use of examples would also be a desirable feature.

#### **6.3.2 Nihat conference two: Gorkem**

During our collaborative analysis of the transcript Nihat and I noted the following categories: praise; inconsistency / selectivity; surface-global; limitations of conferencing; correct-incorrect revision; request to write again; offer of any questions; thanks. We felt two of these categories, praise and interpersonal language, contained features teachers engaged in Stage Two conferencing should be informed of.

##### **6.3.2.1 Praise and interpersonal language**

Similar to his Stage One conference with Buğra (above), with Gorkem, Nihat chose to begin with praise. This was followed once more by a 'blow-softening' move which involved mitigation features. It is interesting to compare extracts

concerning Nihat's earlier praise in 6.3.1.2 with the extracts below in his conference with Gorkem. In extracts three and six he precedes his criticism with two examples of praise; in extracts four and seven there is only one.

**Extract 6: turn one**

*On the whole your English is very good. I like it very much but, er, still **we** have some problems. Let **me** see.*

Nihat and I also noted within the above how he firstly uses the inclusive 'we', but follows this with '*Let me see*' which suggests he feels working on the text is not such a collaborative affair. In other words, he would appear to be implying 'the writing belongs to both of us, but the problem areas are for me to deal with'. This illustrates how teachers of writing may, when providing feedback, appropriate the student's text. A further example of praise is as follows:

**Extract 7: turn two**

*What I am saying is not related to form, but is, er, related to content, but your English is very good so you can choose better words and better expressions so instead of using this you can use 'are' instead of 'must be'.*

Nihat felt once again the data revealed a desirable method for offering praise which could be followed up by criticism. He also noted how in extract six the use of pronouns 'we' and 'me' was an undesirable feature of conferencing as it tended to signal the wrong message to the student concerning the ownership of the text under consideration.

### 6.3.2.2 Problematic issues

Nihat identified an example of what he believed was unsuccessful feedback, or how such feedback was poorly dealt with by the student. Gorkem's original draft read as follows: (text in bold italic is taken from the original essay, while text in normal italic is taken from the transcript).

#### **Extract 8**

***Although modems must be included in the computers of a new generation, ask the dealer for a modem as it performs the function of converting data such as photos or texts into electronic signals. In that way you'll be able to reach global web on telephone line.***

Referring to the passage above, Nihat's advice during the conference was as follows.

#### **Extract 9: turn three**

*There is a problem with the use of 'must be' here. Right. "Although modems must be included in the computers of the new generation." This cannot.. this is something optional.. it is not a must. What I am saying is not related to form, but is, er, related to content, but your English is very good so you can choose better words and better expressions so instead of using this you can use 'are' instead of 'must be'. The most important problem with your essay is the use of 'because' here, which gives the reason of something, but when you read this sentence as a whole, "...ask the dealer for...data", This is not the reason why you ask the shopkeeper for a modem. This cannot be the reason; this is something logical. There is a logical mistake here.*

Based on this advice, in his follow up draft Gorkem produced the following:

***Although modems are included in the computers of new generation, ask the dealer for a modem as it provides the computer to reach global web on telephone line in the way of converting data such as photos or texts into electronic signals.***

Nihat commented on this: *“Maybe he didn’t understand what I was trying to mention here, or maybe I couldn’t explain it.”* The main point is that although the correct change (from ‘must’ to ‘are’ was made by the student, other parts (underlined in extracts eight and nine) were also changed, but the work was, on the whole, impoverished.

### **6.3.2.3 Desirable / undesirable conferencing features**

Nihat felt negotiation would have enabled clarification of meaning concerning style. This point would support the encouragement of L1 teacher-student negotiation. A theme was beginning to emerge which concerned how teacher-appropriation of the student’s text, along with domination of the conference and allowing no room for negotiation, resulted in unresolved matters in the follow-up draft.

Illustrating how, and therefore performing a heuristic role, his awareness had been raised, Nihat had not noticed how his style involved providing direct feedback with no encouragement for the student to identify problem areas. In future he felt a more desirable conferencing technique would be to elicit in order to encourage student-locate – student-correct moves. He commented on how his feedback style was over-prescriptive and added how he might

have been more motivating and encouraging. Regarding future conferencing, Nihat commented how he could 'ask students to find their own solutions'.

### **6.3.3 Ömer conference one: Gökhan**

Ömer and I arranged to read separately the transcripts of him conferencing with Gökhan and meet one week later in order to compare notes. During our subsequent collaborative analysis we noted the following categories: conferencing in pairs; providing background; praise; interpersonal language; increased interaction; teacher pauses; extended student comments; teacher questioning; request for confirmation; limitations; inhibitions; expectations; concluding the conference. From this list we selected the seven points below (6.3.3.1 – 6.3.3.1) which we felt illustrated features of conferencing teachers involved in Stage Two conferencing would benefit from being made aware of.

#### **6.3.3.1 Previewing / interpersonal language**

Like Nihat, Ömer opted to conference in his office with one student at a time, but while the other was present in the room.

#### ***Extract 10: turn one***

<p><i>I have two students of mine in my office with me now: Gözde and Gökhan. Welcome Gözde and Gökhan. <u>Let's</u> start with you Gökhan. I have your essay with me now on my desk. <u>Let's</u> start with the first paragraph</i></p>
---

We noted how Ömer's use of the inclusive 'Let's' indicates to the student that the conference will involve collaboration. Addressing both students in the



room, Ömer then provided the background and began by praising Gökhan's work.

**Extract 11: turn one**

*In our lesson I'm sure you all remember that we discussed how to write a process essay, and I'm sure you know that in the first paragraph we want you to write some sentences that will give us background information and a thesis statement, as well. So here I can see some sentences; I think the first two or three sentences, which give us the necessary background information,*

**6.3.3.2 Praise**

Ömer ends turn one with praise - followed up by a student response to this - and then opts for a mitigation feature before warning the student.

**Extract 12: turns one to four**

**Ömer:** ....I appreciate your attempt to use some new words  
**Gökhan:** yes, I tried to look up in a dictionary and I tried to use new words  
**Ömer:** but of course the more you use new words, the riskier it gets  
**Gökhan:** yes I know

It is also evident that conferencing has potential for motivating students. Ömer also showed examples of how Gökhan, perhaps motivated to do so by the amount of teacher interest shown in him in the form of a personal conference, had corrected points that were not actually made in the conference.

### 6.3.3.3 Pauses

Ömer and I noticed the increased level of interaction throughout this conference. This was especially so when we both contrasted this with the conferences Nihat carried out (Appendix F). Of the thirty-five turns in the transcript, seventeen belong to Gökhan, some such as in extract 13 are extended, i.e. beyond clause level.

#### ***Extract 13: turn two***

***Gökhan:*** *yes, I tried to look up in a dictionary and I tried to use new words*

We felt such extended contributions were perhaps due to Ömer's pauses which provided an opportunity for the student to respond with a contribution to the conference. Ömer then warns:

#### ***Extract 14: turn three***

***Ömer:*** *but of course the more you use new words, the riskier it gets*

#### ***Extract 15: turn five***

***Ömer:*** *so here for example in the second sentence I can see a word which has a wrong form. I think 'lately' for example; 'lately' is an adverb, but let me read the sentence. (Ömer reads: "As it is shown in the lately surveys..."). Instead of 'lately' you should use (two second pause)*

Based on the two examples above, Ömer and I felt pausing to enable the student to structure and contribute a comment to the conference should be

designated a desirable feature, the use of which should be encouraged by teachers during Stage Two conferencing. 6.4.9 explains reasons for this

#### **6.3.3.4 Teacher-questioning**

Ömer also questioned Gökhan several times, which clearly enabled the conference to become more interactive. Examples of this include the following, where for clarity I have underlined his question words

##### ***Extract 16:turn nine***

**Ömer:** *Which sentence is the thesis statement in your first paragraph?.... do you remember why we write a thesis statement? I mean what is the function of a thesis statement in an essay?.*

Ömer followed the above by asking for confirmation of what he had heard. *...so you mean the thesis statement should tell the reader what he or she's going to read.* Such direct questioning, involving open-ended probing and resulting in the longest of Gökhan's responses, we felt to be a desirable feature of conferencing as it tended to increase the level of interaction during the conference.

#### **6.3.3.4 Limitations of conferencing**

Analysis of the two essay drafts revealed to us a particular point of interest in that two types of avoidance strategy were illustrated: avoidance by omission (6.3.3.5.1), and avoidance by simplifying (6.3.3.5.2). This is further referred to in chapter thirteen concerning findings of this study.

### 6.3.3.5.1 Avoidance by omission

The first concerned where Ömer had indicated that the word 'lately' (extract 18, below) was written in the wrong form and had coded this accordingly as WF. He possibly intended to elicit 'latest' from the student. However, when the student produced the required form, Ömer, instead of praising this, ostensibly completely ignores it, suggests another possibility and indicates he wishes to move on. This apparent confusion reveals another case of possible limitations in teacher-assistance during conferences. That the student does not follow this up perhaps illustrates Hyland's point (2003: 192) about students being inhibited in the presence of superiors, and not wishing to question authority figures.

In the original draft Gökhan had written: ***As it's shown in the lately surveys, people believe that internet was involved in our daily life.***

#### ***Extract 18: turns two - eight***

**Ömer:** .....and I appreciate your attempt to use some new words

**Gökhan:** yes, I tried to look up in a dictionary and I tried to use new words

**Ömer:** but of course the more you use new words, the riskier it gets

**Gökhan:** yes I know

**Ömer:** so here for example in the second sentence I can see a word which has a wrong form. I think 'lately' for example; 'lately' is an adverb, but let me read the sentence. (Ömer reads: "As it is shown in the lately surveys..."). Instead of 'lately' you should use

**Gökhan:** 'latest' maybe

**Ömer:** maybe 'recent surveys', so its form is not correct, anyway, so it's as I told you before, it's normal.

The follow up draft was altered to: ***As it's shown in the (word omitted) surveys, people believe that internet was a part of our daily life.*** Instead of trusting his own ability or taking the advice given by the teacher Gökhan has evaded the issue by removing the problem word and replacing it with nothing. This was an example of how a conference supported by annotations on the original draft, which one would expect to assist and improve student writing had clearly not done so. The student had either misunderstood, chosen to ignore the advice given, or simply forgot it. Ömer felt that this part, although discussed, had not been a success and explained how, while also suggesting the use of the term 'recent surveys' he had nodded at the student's suggestion to use 'latest'. Referred to in 5.10.1.1 and 5.10.1.1, this exemplifies an inadequacy of transcribing and how, unlike the use of video facilities, voice recordings are unable to capture the complete situation.

It was not clear to Ömer or myself why the student had engaged in the above avoidance strategy. We felt teachers during Stage Two conferencing should ensure students do not adopt this strategy by investigating why the second draft included such features.

#### **6.3.3.5.2 Avoidance by simplification**

Concerning further limitations, we noted the example of how in extract 20, instead of avoidance by omission, oral feedback had also resulted in the student avoiding the direct issue by opting for less complexity. The original draft had read:

### Extract 18

*Consequently, it will be shown to you with coherent processes to be participate in this marvellous insanity.*

### Extract 19: turns thirteen - fifteen

**Ömer:** *actually again we have the same problem with the last sentence I think. Again I can see some words that you've just found I think, in a dictionary, and you've tried to use them in your thesis statement, like, for example, 'coherence' and 'to participate in' or 'insanity', so I think these words are new and you've just found them in a dictionary.*

**Gökhan:** *I learnt 'coherence'... I tried to use ... in the first paragraph*

**Ömer:** *There are some grammar mistakes in this sentence: 'to be participate in'. Actually you cannot use the verb 'to be' here. Anyway, you should change it and again look it up please and try to find the correct form.*

Following the conference discussion the student had altered this to: ***It will be shown to you with simple steps to join this marvellous insanity.***

#### 6.3.3.6 How much to discuss

Further limitations we noted included how several points annotated for discussion on the first draft were not mentioned in the conference. When I asked him about this, Ömer could not provide a reason, apart from feeling pressed for time.

#### 6.3.3.7 Instructions for revision

Another point borne out by the data was how, at the end of the conference, there appeared to be no need for points of action for revision to be

summarised by either the student or the teacher. White and Arndt (1999) in Hyland (2003:197) suggest the responsibility for this should lie with the student.

On three occasions we noted Ömer's use of the word 'just'. We agreed this signalled to the student that perhaps a simple process was involved.

**Extract 20: turns twenty-five - twenty-eight**

**Ömer:**.....the verb 'depend' hasn't been used correctly, so you should change it and you should correct it; just check it in your dictionary. And also in the first paragraph in the body we have a very long sentence that should be divided in to two, I think, you should separate these, OK?

**Gökhan:** maybe I should use a comma or a full stop

**Ömer:** yeah, a full stop or a semi-colon; just think about it. And what about the last paragraph? Here I can see an example.

And in the concluding phase of the conference:

**Extract 21: turn 34**

**Ömer:** ok, and now you're supposed to write your second draft. Just consider these things; keep them in mind and please try to correct them. ok?

We noted that use of *just check in your dictionary* had led Gökhan to change **The brand of the computer is not depend upon.. to The brand of the computer don't depend upon....** In future conferencing we felt we should not expect students to be able to act on what we agreed were perhaps vague instructions, and avoid the use of such terms such as 'just' that seem to hint at simplicity.

#### **6.3.3.8 Desirable / undesirable conferencing features**

The above conference firstly included the desirable feature of providing background; this, we believed, served to activate the student's schemata concerning the writing. Two other desirable features included the provision of praise, and suitable interpersonal language involving inclusive pronouns. Increased interaction in the conference resulting from suitable teacher-pausing and teacher-questioning were also both felt to be desirable features.

#### **6.3.4 Ömer conference two: Gozde**

As with our analysis of the previous transcript in 6.3.3, Ömer and I arranged to read separately the transcripts of him conferencing with Gozde and meet one week later in order to compare notes. The collaborative analysis with Ömer of this transcript enabled us to locate the following three categories: increased interaction; overload; authority. These are each dealt with below.

##### **6.3.4.1 Increased interaction**

By involving Gozde in twelve of the twenty-six turns, eight of which she extended, Ömer noted how interactive this conference was. Such a ratio, Ömer felt was, as in his conference with Gökhan, a result of his questioning technique which involved pausing in order to elicit student-response. Ömer noted his stress of the role and importance of thesis statements and how he began by focusing on missing elements and proceeded to deeper questioning. This is illustrated in extract 22.



**Extract 22: turns one - three**

**Ömer:** .....could you please show me where your thesis statement is.. where  
is your thesis statement

**Gözde:** I didn't show it I tried to show it in the paragraph but I didn't know

**Ömer:** so you mean it's not possible to find a specific sentence which expresses the  
main idea..or do you mean the whole paragraph fulfils this function on the  
matter

**6.3.4.2 Overload**

We discussed the possibility that perhaps Gözde might require strong aural skills as the structure and level of some of Ömer's explanations, especially the degree of repetition or over-insistence in turn seven (extract 23, below), might be considered undesirable.

**Extract 23; turn seven**

**Ömer:** yeah, but we need to write a thesis statement, ok, in the first paragraph we  
need to see a thesis statement, because the reader should know what she's going to  
read in the essay. ok. So this is the function of the thesis statement.. alright.. so  
please try to write a thesis statement in the first paragraph.

**6.3.4.3 Authority**

Ömer and I felt Gözde appears, in turns eighteen to twenty-two (extract 24) to question Ömer's authority. This results in him further asserting his authority in a turn involving repeated use of the word 'summarise(s)'. This turn appears to act, prior to moving onto a new topic, as a reinforcement of his point. A video-recording of this exchange would probably have revealed that the student, far

from challenging Ömer's authority, was in fact simply struggling to explain herself. With only the audio-recording to work from, the matter is open to interpretation.

**Extract 24: turns eighteen – twenty-two**

**Ömer:** *did you summarize the ideas expressed in the body, here in the last paragraph*

**Gözde:** *I feel silly about it because I put the thesis statement in the first paragraph and I put a summarise in the last paragraph*

**Ömer:** *you put, or you didn't put?*

**Gözde:** *I didn't put, but it's not necessary I think because if you put a thesis statement in paragraph one, you don't need to summarise I think*

**Ömer:** *but, actually, in the conclusion it's necessary to summarise, er, what is expressed in the body, so in these paragraphs in the body you express some ideas, so you tell the reader something about the process here and you should summarise them in the conclusion. so there must be a sentence which summarises all those ideas mentioned in the body; ok. we need to see a sentence which summarises them*

As a consequence of our analysis we agreed that Stage Two conferencing might, where teachers felt appropriate, make use of the mutual L1. This feature was implemented by both Ece and Seda, examples of which, taken from Appendix K are illustrated in 11.8.4.

#### **6.3.4.4 Desirable / undesirable conferencing features**

We noted how this conference, as with Ömer's previous conference, illustrated desirable features concerning interaction, especially with regard to

eliciting, pausing and probing. The potential use of the L1 was also noted as a desirable conferencing feature.

Ömer noticed how Gozde, on being told she had to extend her body paragraph one, had simply joined paragraphs one and two. Ömer also provided the example of how although he had discussed the essay's thesis statement, he did not feel there had been a significant improvement. Less desirable features we noted were those in which Ömer was possibly over-insistent, especially when perhaps over-exerting his authority.

### **6.3.5 Seda conference one: Gamze**

In contrast to transcript analyses with Ömer, due to time constraints those with Seda were carried out only jointly. The first analysis by Seda and myself revealed the following categories: length; praise-subject evaluation; mother-tongue use; local-global; marking conference stages; answering her own questions; concluding the conference.

#### **6.3.5.1 Length**

Consisting of ninety-two turns and lasting seventeen minutes, this was by far the longest of the six Stage One conferences. We agreed it is possible that a student at this level could have difficulties comprehending such a linguistic load satisfactorily. Our analysis led Seda to realise the length was due to her focusing on all errors found in the writing. On reflection she felt such comprehensive coverage was unnecessary. Seda felt brevity would be more suited to future conferencing and noted that her own classroom style of

lengthy explanation was reflected in this conference. If she had the chance to repeat the conferences Seda would “cut it a bit shorter and elicit, and see what they do instead of talking about everything.” These points reveal how Seda was not only constructing her personal interpretation of how to conference in the future, but at the same time also reflecting on her pedagogical approach in the classroom. Table 9a in 9.3.2 illustrates how Seda during Stage Two conferencing did not opt for brevity, although 11.7.4 illustrates her tendency towards eliciting.

#### **6.3.5.2 Praise**

Other features that we noted included those in extract 25 where Seda opens with praise (1) and mitigation (2).

#### ***Extract 25: Turn five***

*(1) Yes, that's right and all in all it's a good essay, (2) but of course there are some points we need to er, talk about.*

#### **6.3.5.3 Unnecessary detail**

Of concern to Seda and I was the section below, involving Seda explaining how the student might not use ‘For example’ or ‘For instance’. Gamze (the student) suggests ‘such as’ as an alternative, but Seda elicits ‘like’ as more preferable, (turn forty). Following the point noted in 6.3.4.3 on this topic we both agreed this appeared to be another case of a language point that may have been resolved by negotiating this with discussion in the mother-tongue. 11.8.4 explains five cases of how Seda later used the L1 in her conference.

Chapter twelve data also indicate the possibility that her use of the L1 enabled successful alterations in the student's follow-up draft.

**Extract 26: turns thirty-nine – forty two**

**Seda:** ...and also I have underlined these two words: 'for example' and 'for instance'.

*'for example' and 'for instance' do not sound very good in essays right? And instead of using them*

**Gamze:** you can use 'such as'

**Seda:** that's right.. so you have thought about this before?

**Gamze:** yes

**Seda:** (reading) "subsequently..... company such as... again you say 'such as'? If

*you say such as again and again it would be boring... it would repeat the*

*same structure so here we can say..?*

**Gamze:** like

**Seda:** 'like', instead of 'such as'.. because we don't want the reader to be bored, right?

**6.3.5.4 Conference discourse markers**

As illustrated below, Seda marks beginnings and endings of stages in the conference discourse

**Extract 27: turn five**

**Seda:** First of all let us talk about **the use of English** in your essay, ok? How we use the language

**Extract 28: turn fifty**

**Seda:** OK. thank you, so this is all about **the use of English** part

And later:

**Extract 29: turns sixty-one – sixty-five**

**Seda:** now let's look at it as a process essay.. we looked at the grammar, we looked at the English, the use of English, now let us look at it in terms of the essay type.

**Gamze:** ?

**Seda:** this is a process essay and what are... there are some important things while writing an essay right? And, for example, in the introduction what's the most important thing?

**Gamze:** thesis statement

**Seda:** thesis statement

And dealing with the conclusion:

**Extract 30: turn 84**

**Seda:** Ok and the last thing is... last but not least because it's about the conclusion.. and remember the conclusion is the last part that the reader reads, right

**6.3.5.5 Local to global**

We noted how, in the above, Seda dealt with surface problems in what she terms 'the use of English section' and then goes on to deal with more global matters such as thesis statements. Seda explained how she would in future conferences deal with global errors firstly and local errors later, "because surface errors are always there, and we are not teaching grammar."

**6.3.5.6 Self-answering**

We noted how her own turns dominated the conference and, when commenting on this, Seda felt the student should participate more, adding: "I

shouldn't have interrupted her." Seda realised her conferencing style with Gamze involved several examples of successful eliciting although we noted that the result was generally a two-to-four word utterance, and also how Seda often answers her own question.

**Extract 31:turns 77-82**

**Seda:** *instead of repeating the same structure you could have used..?*

**Gamze:** *er, must*

**Seda:** *different structures.. you can change your modal verb or you can use other structures.. for example.. instead of saying 'firstly you should buy a computer', you can say 'the first step is to.*

**Seda & Gamze:** *buy a computer*

**Seda:** *or you can use after or before as time conjunctions.. after doing this you can do that, for example*

### 6.3.5.7 Concluding the conference

**Extract 32: turn 90**

**Seda:** *and you can also include this part...so you'll find a way to relate it to your body paragraph.. that's important..and if you do all these your essay will be perfect..*

The above extract indicates the abrupt end to the conference and how Seda believed students would not require an end of conference summary of points to consider, as they would, prior to working on their second draft, be able to recall what was said about the original draft. This point contrasts strongly with her comments (to me in a conversation) following her Stage Two conference

with Fatih (Chapter twelve), where she explained his constant returning to ask for guidance over his follow-up draft.

#### **6.3.5.8 Desirable / undesirable conferencing features**

Seda and I agreed that the provision of praise followed by mitigation features was (following its use by Nihat and Ömer) another example of the implementation of a feature we regarded as desirable and thus to be encouraged in Stage Two conferencing. Marking the stages of the conference we agreed was also a desirable feature, and another to be recommended for Stage Two conferencing. Dealing with global then local concerns in the writing we also suggested for further use. The suggestion of using the L1 to clarify matters we regarded as desirable. A closer look at two other categories suggested to Seda and I that answering one's own questions was undesirable and to be avoided, and that, in future, summarising or asking the student to summarise the contents of the conference would be a desirable feature.

#### **6.3.6 Seda conference two: Goksenin**

Our analysis of the transcript of the conference concerning Seda and Goksenin indicated the following categories: marked stages; global-local; elicited; praise; collaboration; a summary was not required. Several of these points were illustrated in the previous section. This section further illustrates Seda's method of eliciting (6.3.6.1) and her use of conferencing discourse markers (6.3.6.2).



### 6.3.6.1 Eliciting

We noted how Seda at first elicits but, on failing to get a suitable response, as in her conference with Gamze above (6.3.5.6), later answers her own question. Noticing this for the second time Seda commented how she might in future pause in order to give the student time to contribute to the conference.

#### **Extract 33: turns three - eleven**

**Seda:** ....remember we use 'however' to introduce opposite ideas, right? I think you want to say something different

**Göksenin:** yes, so it's a big mistake I make

**Seda:** so instead of however you can say..? In..?

**Göksenin:** in addition

**Seda:** you can say in addition or, or maybe 'while you are doing all these'

**Göksenin:** meanwhile

**Seda:** yes, you can also use 'meanwhile' (She reads) "meanwhile you should also subscribe to an internet server company.." here you have used meanwhile so there's an alternative to meanwhile. In the...?

**Göksenin:** in the..

**Seda:** 'in the meantime'.. both of them are possible..

### 6.3.6.2 Conference discourse markers

Seda noted how she had marked the end of a stage (extract 34) but not, as with Gamze (6.3.5.4), its beginning.

#### **Extract 34: turn fifteen**

**Seda:** ... that's the use of English part.. and if we look at your essay format the first thing we need to look at is of course your introduction..

### **6.3.7 Desirable / undesirable conferencing features**

Analysis of the above led Seda and I to believe that eliciting was a desirable feature of conferencing, and that marking the stage of the conference for the student would also be of benefit during Stage Two conferencing.

## **6.4 Summary of desirable conferencing features: introduction**

From our analysis of Stage One conferencing data the AR team and I believed features explained in 6.4.1- 6.4.12 to be the most desirable for conferencing. Chapter nine firstly outlines in detail how far the newly-formed AR team, this time including myself, was able to implement these features during Stage Two conferencing. Following this, chapters nine to twelve outline a closer analysis of transcripts and essay drafts in order to identify relationships between such features and successful alterations on follow-up drafts. Based upon our on-going analyses, where necessary, some of the features and tables were modified to enable more efficient analyses.

### **6.4.1 Providing background / overview**

6.3.3.1 illustrates how Ömer provided background to the conference concerning the work about to be discussed. Such a feature enables both teacher and student to recap and be reminded of the work thus far.

### **6.4.2 Limiting the number of points to deal with**

As 6.3.1 indicates, Nihat dealt in his first conference with most but not all points annotated on the original draft with which he and the student worked during the conference. 6.3.3.5 provides a second example of how Ömer

marked several points for discussion that were subsequently not referred to. It may be more beneficial to either restrict the number of points or at least focus on all, however briefly. 6.3.5.1 illustrates how, when Seda provided comprehensive coverage of the points noted, the length of the conference may have resulted in overload for the student.

#### **6.4.3 Helpful conference discourse markers**

6.3.5.4 illustrates the valuable use by Seda of marking the beginning and ending of stages of the conference so that the focus for discussion at each stage is clear to the student. Further examples of the value of discourse markers while conferencing are illustrated in 6.3.6.2.

#### **6.4.4 Encouraging self correction**

6.3.1.1 illustrates how it would be more beneficial for the purposes of conferencing if students were encouraged to locate and repair errors noted. In order to do this, prior to the conference students should be provided with a teacher-annotated copy of their work. 6.3.1.1 also illustrates that instead of stating categorically what the error is, teachers should question in order to elicit the errors and how the student might repair them. 6.3.6.1 illustrates the value to conferencing of eliciting, while 6.3.5.5 illustrates how Seda would in future focus more on global than local matters in the student's work.

#### **6.4.5 Providing praise and mitigating comments**

6.3.1.2 illustrates the role and importance of praise during conferencing, and how this is accompanied by mitigation which tends to tone down the critical

force. The 'softening the blow' should precede the follow-up criticism. 6.3.2.1 indicates that praise may be extended, while 6.3.3.2 provides another example of mitigation in Ömer's use of 'but of course'. While 6.3.1.2 exemplifies a paired comment, combining criticism with either praise or a suggestion, 6.3.3.2 exemplifies a hedged comment. 6.3.5.2 also illustrates Seda's use of a paired comment when praising.

#### **6.4.6 Providing helpful examples**

6.3.1.3 illustrates that since points raised had not been worked on during follow-up drafts, providing examples of what the teacher intended should be considered. This is in order to reinforce points made and thus clarify matters for the student.

#### **6.4.7 Suitable pronoun choice**

6.3.2.1 illustrates an example of how teachers should be careful in their choice of pronouns during conferencing. This is in order to convey to the student the belief that conferencing is a collaborative event. It may therefore be more useful to use the more inclusive second person plural forms *we* and *us*. 6.3.3.1 illustrates how the teacher's use of *let's* on two occasions in the opening turn indicates from the start that the conference will involve collaboration.

#### **6.4.8 Negotiation in the L1**

6.3.2.3 illustrates a problematic area of conferencing which resulted in unsuccessful feedback in the sense that the point made was inadequately

dealt with by the student on his follow-up draft. Where necessary it may be useful to carry out certain sections of the conference in the L1. 6.3.4.3 illustrates how the selective use of the L1 might have enabled clarification of a point more easily and thus avoiding issues of teachers asserting authority and students struggling to explain.

#### **6.4.9 Pausing to encourage interaction**

6.3.3.3 illustrates the importance to the conference of the teacher pausing in order for the student to structure and provide their contribution to the conference. Such pausing, also termed 'wait time', increases the possibility of increased interaction and involvement of the student. At the same time it decreases the level of teacher domination of the conference. Hyland (2003:192) states: 'The most successful conferences are those in which students are active participants, asking questions, clarifying meaning and discussing their papers, rather than passively accepting advice

#### **6.4.10 Questioning to increase interaction**

6.3.3.4 illustrates how teacher-questioning involving open-ended questions and probing enable the conference to become more interactive. 6.3.4.1 also illustrates examples of how teacher-questioning resulted in an extended student response. 6.3.5.6 illustrates how teachers should avoid answering their own questions. 6.4.9 (above) suggests a means of enabling this.

#### **6.4.11 Clear instructions for follow-up drafts**

6.3.3.5 illustrates how Ömer's comments tend to suggest the process of writing a follow-up draft is a simple matter and that the student will be able to keep in mind all points considered during the conference. 6.3.5.7 illustrates how Seda's conference ends abruptly. White and Arndt (1991) in Hyland (2003:97) suggest the responsibility for a summary of points of action for revision should lie with the student.

#### **6.4.12 Analysing follow-up drafts**

6.3.3.4 illustrates how teachers should investigate reasons why students have avoided working on advice provided by the teacher during a conference or have taken the safe option of simplifying and, as a consequence, possibly impoverishing their writing.

#### **6.5.1 Reflexive summary for MCA One**

The AR team realised that the analysis in this chapter was the first of seven mini-cycles of analysis (MCA) in this study. (Table 13a in 13.2.2a illustrates all MCAs). Each MCA contained several issues that influenced the future direction of the study. Throughout the remainder of this study, at the end of each MCA I have provided a summary based on what the team believed were either issues of significance, key moments or issues involving critical action research.

The reflexive summary for this MCA outlines factors the team noted during reflection on the analysis of six conference transcripts by three Turkish

teachers of English and myself. It also notes issues that relate to critical action research in terms of power and gender.

At this point in the study the team was male-dominant; of the four members involved, only Seda was female. Also noted was the fact that the team of Nihat, Omer and Seda, each Turkish teachers of English as a non-native language in their own country, were led from the outside by myself, a teacher of English as his native language, but working overseas. My working from the outside and with the conflicting roles of both change agent and writing coordinator at IYTE was, I believed, proving problematic and resulted in my moving to work from within the team.

In spite of the above tensions, the analysis resulted in the team's location of twelve features we felt desirable or undesirable for future conferencing. This list, although later adapted, formed the basis for the remainder of our study. Two other issues that arose concerned our feeling at the time that conferencing should be done only with students from groups A and B at IYTE, i.e. students who were more linguistically capable than the elementary students in C groups. This belief later changed; for the second stage of conferencing the team worked only with students from C groups. A final issue concerned my choice of audio technology to record the conferences: in order to avoid potential pitfalls, I decided to invest in digital technology.

### **6.5.2 Chapter summary**

This chapter has outlined the start of the analysis stage within the Burns (2005) framework. Within this overall analysis we noticed the first instance of mini-cycles of analysis (MCA) involving category coding and category development. The analysis involved myself (moving from outside of to inside the study) and the team (inside) analysing in order to identify desirable and undesirable conferencing features. The outcome of this first MCA, a full list of which appears in 13.2.2a, was a list of desirable features for teachers involved in Stage Two conferencing to adapt and implement. The following chapter outlines how, based on the findings of this MCA, the study entered a period of speculating on how to proceed.



## Chapter Seven

### Hypothesising / Speculating: MCA Two

#### 7.1 Introduction

Although this and the following chapter are relatively short, rather than combine them I have deliberately kept them as separate chapters since I feel each represents a distinct phase within Burns (2005) framework. Whereas the previous chapter represented the initial data analysis / reflecting stage of Burns (2005), a phase at the end of which twelve desirable features of conferencing were noted, this chapter outlines the next stage, that of hypothesising / speculating, which involves making plans on how to proceed based upon the prior analysis / reflection. The chapter firstly provides details on the current AR team, plus an update on the study and interviews with each member concerning their future involvement. It concludes with speculation for Stage Two conferencing along with implications for the remainder of the study. The chapter is thus further analysis, but analysis as reflection rather than action. Box 7a indicates how the current chapter fits into the Burns (2005) framework. While the previous chapter represented a first complete MCA, this and the following chapter combine to form a second MCA.

#### Box 7a: Burns (2005) hypothesising / speculating

exploring → identifying → planning → data collecting → analysing / reflecting → <b>hypothesising / speculating</b> → intervening → observing → reporting → writing → presenting
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### 7.1.1 The study to date

This phase marked the start of year three of this five year study. My research diary records for this time showed that on returning from the summer vacation I spoke individually with each of the three members of the AR team currently involved, in order to discuss whether they were willing and able to continue their participation by engaging in Stage Two conferences. Table 7a shows that Ömer and Seda had previously conferenced with students in group B, who were currently at good lower intermediate level, while Nihat had conferenced with intermediate level students in group A. The students' work around which Stage One conferences was based was their process type essays, in which they had explained the procedures involved with getting connected to the internet. By this time the six students involved in Stage One conferences had all passed the IYTE preparatory year final exam and were now studying in their various faculties. On reflection, it is interesting to note how, in relation to 7.4, the emphasis for Stage One conferences was on inviting students from levels A and B. For Stage Two the newly-formed AR team were able to invite students from level C. This possibly reflects teacher development in conferencing skills and the team's confidence and belief that useful conferencing may be carried out with learners at lower levels, too.

**Table 7a: Stage One conferencing participants**

Teacher	Students	Level
Seda Butun	Gamze and Göksenin	B
Ömer Esit	Gözde and Gökhan	B
Nihat Kocyigit	Buğra and Gökem	A

## **7.2 The action research team**

### **7.2.1 Seda**

As 5.5.1 explains, Seda had been on maternity leave during year one of this study, and unable to participate in the group and individual interviews that formed a part of the investigative study, (4.9 and 4.11) the exploring and identifying stage of Burns (2005). She had by this time, however, been involved for the three most recent stages of the framework. During the interview she informed me that she did not wish to commit herself to teaching writing classes, preferring to focus on teaching speaking instead. She also informed me for the first time that being recorded whilst conferencing or being interviewed was extremely stressful for her. Later in this study Ece also referred to such microphone stress. During the period of Transcript One analysis Seda again requested not to be recorded, therefore during our discussions I made notes. It is clear that the decision to record participants is not one to be taken without care and consideration, but that not having records may limit the study.

### **7.2.2 Ömer**

Ömer had been involved in this study since its inception. He explained that he was facing a challenging year academically as he intended to write articles based on his recently accepted doctoral thesis concerning voice recognition technology. However, like Seda, if he were to be given a writing class he would be happy to continue as a member of the AR team.

### **7.2.3 Nihat**

Nihat, also involved since the beginning of this study, was by this time in the process of completing his doctoral thesis. He expressed interest in continuing in any capacity possible, raised no issues, and nor did he comment on his current workload. 8.2 explains how both Ömer and Nihat were unable to continue in this study, and how for Stage Two conferencing the study required a new AR team that also included myself.

### **7.3 Ethical Issues**

Seda and Ömer asked me, as coordinator of EAP writing, not to include them in the list of teachers I sometimes put forward to the Director to teach writing in the forthcoming year at IYTE. However, if, in spite of my not requesting their presence they were eventually to teach writing, they would accept that decision and continue to participate in the study. This represented a researcher dilemma: not to request them as a teacher of writing – and I believed them at the time to be among the most capable at IYTE - might have led directly to my losing them as members of the AR team. Lying, and secretly requesting their presence due to their skill and experience, while indirectly enhancing the study, might have resulted in them discovering this later, which would, I believed, have been unethical. I raised the possibility that they could, although not actually teaching them, conference with students from another teacher's writing class. Both would thus be able to apply the skills they had acquired from their two previous conferences, but with students unfamiliar to them. In fact this was not necessary since Ömer departed the study and Seda was given a writing class from which she later chose students with whom to

conference. Analyses of her Stage Two conferences appear in chapters eleven and twelve.

#### **7.4 Conferencing issues**

Following the above, I was not asked, and nor did I offer, to provide the IYTE Director with a list of teachers of writing I would prefer to work with. The timetable for the forthcoming year later revealed that both Nihat and Seda had a writing class, although it was with a C group class at beginner level. Conferencing with students L2 at such a level in IYTE is generally restricted as their oral and aural skills are fairly limited until well into semester one. The same point concerned their degree of skill in writing, as they would be unable to produce work even at paragraph level until late in the semester. This issue, however, was overcome by taking care with student selection for the next stage of this study. See 8.8 for details.

#### **7.5 Teacher-meeting**

I later arranged a group interview with the AR team, although Nihat was unable to attend. Specific accounts of these interviews appear in 7.5.1 and 7.5.2. We looked through what our study had achieved thus far in order to recall their two Stage One conferences, briefly reminding ourselves of the Burns (2005) model, and that we were now involved in hypothesizing about what we should do prior to intervening and carrying out Stage Two conferences. As one of the stated aims of AR according to Dörnyei (2007:191), who quotes David (2002:12) is to 'democratize research in order to avoid the pitfalls of the top-down technology transfer model of academic

intervention,’ at this point I kept to a minimum any suggestions as to how we might do so.

### **7.5.1 Seda**

Seda explained that she would meet with Ömer and Nihat, and confirmed her earlier suggestion that she felt the most suitable time of the year for Stage Two conferences to take place would be early in semester two, when she felt student language skills would be greatly improved.

At the door, after I had thanked her for her continued interest she commented: “I am happy to help you with your project.” These remarks concerned me as they led me to believe she did not see herself as a team member engaged in research leading to teacher-development. I had originally felt the reason for this was due to the current difficulty in setting up a meeting for all three to attend at which we could have discussed the findings of our study in more detail. As later chapters illustrate, Seda initially proved to be a reliable member of the study during Stage Two conferencing, although as 11.2 explains, she eventually withdrew due to her heavy workload at IYTE.

### **7.5.2 Ömer**

Ömer was continuing as a team member on our assumption that it was sound research to involve him in conferencing (in contrast to Seda and Nihat) with students completely unfamiliar to him in the classroom, (unless he was their teacher for reading or speaking or main course English). He introduced the word “strategies” to our conversation concerning data analysis, referring to

strategies he would or would not repeat during Stage Two conferencing, along with those he would introduce. Owing to his departure, further conferencing with Ömer never took place. Sections 8.1-8.3 explain how Ece Gönçer, a junior colleague at IYTE, replaced him for Stage Two conferencing.

### **7.6.1 Speculation for Stage Two conferencing**

At this point the AR team had a summary of points agreed as desirable for conferencing (6.4) from which to work, and members were expressing a preference to develop their knowledge by reflecting on this summary. The latter point is covered by Mann (2005) concerning the value of reflection and the formation of teacher self-knowledge, in contrast to the more simplistic knowledge transmission model. The aim was for the AR team to absorb the list of features prior to carrying out Stage Two conferencing and seek to implement features where possible.

Discussion based on the summary of desirable features in 6.4 concerned the following: students would be provided with a photocopy of the annotated draft one so that they would be able to read it and return with questions to ask or points to raise. A second point concerned ensuring the work in the follow-up draft reflected the student's wishes and was not merely a draft based on what the teacher believed it should look like. This was a key point as it links well with the work of Goldstein and Conrad (1990) who concluded how the most successful corrections in the second draft were those that had resulted from teacher-student negotiation. In future conferencing teacher-domination of the proceedings should be avoided and as far as possible points raised should be

discussed. To assist with point two, a policy of eliciting possible courses of action on problems occurring in draft one would be implemented. Indicating proactive collaboration, Seda and Ömer suggested the most suitable plan for future conferencing would be for the AR team to each deal with two students at C level who would soon be working on problem-solution essay types. This action was implemented; how the resulting conferences were set up is explained in the following chapter, while analysis of data arising from each of the conferences appears in chapters nine to twelve.

## **7.7 Implications for the next stage**

From the above it became clear that the next phase of this study, following the recording and transcribing of Stage Two conferences, would involve analysing the subsequent transcripts along the following lines: the first line of enquiry would be to observe to what degree teachers involved in Stage Two conferencing were able to implement the twelve points noted in 6.4. This approach concerned both a teacher development angle and a more collaborative exploratory approach towards conferencing and what it might achieve. Chapter nine explains how this approach proved to be very time-consuming, and how it was only used in the team's analysis of one of the six conferences. Chapter ten explains how from then onwards the study moved away from looking at how teachers had implemented features and more towards how we felt features noted were related to what the AR team designated as successful alterations on follow-up drafts.



## **7.8 Chapter summary**

This chapter has focused on the sixth of the eleven stages in the framework for AR suggested by Burns (2005), that of hypothesising / speculating on how to proceed based upon previous data analysis. The chapter explained issues involved with proceeding with the same AR team, and then speculated on how to move onto the next stage which involved the AR team implementing desirable features of conferencing. The chapter thus involves part one of a second mini-cycle of analysis; not analysis as action, but as reflection on data.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Intervening: MCA Two Continued**

#### **8 Introduction**

While chapter six outlined the first mini-cycle of analysis (MCA), and chapter seven dealt with speculating on how to proceed in this study, this chapter firstly explains how and why the AR framework suggested by Burns (2005) was adapted. It then explains my decision to participate more directly in the study, along with how and why Ece, another new team member, was recruited. Following this it outlines the outcome of an AR team meeting, and how we planned to approach Stage Two conferencing. It explains issues concerning how students and a writing task were selected for this phase, and ends with an account of how Stage Two conferencing was carried out. This chapter, then, represents a continuation of an MCA, this time by the new AR team looking at data generated by teachers involved in Stage One conferencing. This MCA continues working on the outcome of the first MCA and indicates how, instead of appearing as distinct events, MCAs tend to overlap, in the same way that Stages of the Burns (2005) framework appear as interrelated experiences.

#### **8.1 Adapting Burns (2005)**

According to Burns (2005), following the previous chapter which functioned as the hypothesising / speculating stage, there should then follow a stage involving intervening and, later, observing. The contents of this chapter indicate that the stages suggested by Burns (2005), rather than being clearly

observable events, in fact function, also suggested by Burns, as interrelated experiences. This point is reflected in this study in that in order to intervene and observe what happened when points arising from both analysis and hypothesising concerning future conferencing were implemented, it was firstly necessary to re-implement a previous stage, that of planning / data collection. This is another indication of how, rather than moving in the clear stages that chapter headings of this thesis tend to indicate, the AR model in Burns (2005) is instead a cyclical process of interrelated practices. In fact it would appear that in the case of this study the intervening and observing would then, prior to the reporting, writing and presenting stages, be followed by further analysing / reflecting, as indicated below in box 8b. Box 8a represents the order of eleven stages for an AR process suggested by Burns (2005). 8b represents the order of an AR process that is a more accurate representation of what I feel actually happened. The stages added to 8b appear in bold.

**Box 8a: Burns (2005) overall framework: (previously box 4a)**

exploring → identifying → planning → data collecting → analysing / reflecting  
 → hypothesising / speculating → intervening → observing → reporting →  
 writing → presenting

**Box 8b: adaptation of Burns (2005) for this study**

exploring → identifying → planning → data collecting → analysing / reflecting  
 → hypothesising / speculating → **planning** → **data collecting** → intervening  
 → observing → **analysing / reflecting** → reporting → writing → presenting

The adaptation of the order reflects the point made by Burns (2005: 59) who suggests that processes experienced by action researchers are 'best viewed as necessarily adaptive to the educational situations and circumstances of the participants

## **8.2 AR team changes**

By this point, and based upon discussion with members of the upgrade panel at Warwick University CAL concerned with it, I had also decided to increase my collaborative involvement in our study. I made this decision in the belief that, whereas until now I had been acting as a change-agent working from the margins in assisting the team, having a more direct role within the study would be more suited to the ethos of AR. Such a move is indicative of researcher realisation and development, I feel.

As previously mentioned in 7.2.3, prior to the next phase of this study the team, including myself, was reduced from four to three members following the unexpected departure of Ömer. I believed the presence of another member acting as a replacement for Ömer would help provide sufficient data should Nihat or Seda decide to leave the study for any reason. In fact, as 8.6 outlines, Nihat, who was firstly unable to continue with this study left shortly after to take up employment in a nearby newly-opened university. I was in fact commissioned to interview suitable candidates for the position of deputy department head at the new university. Another ethical issue arose as Nihat, who I interviewed as one of the strongest candidates, subsequently took up the post. By supporting Nihat's application, indirectly I thus deprived myself of

a participant in this study. This is a second example of a researcher dilemma; the first was outlined in 7.3.

### **8.3 Letters of invitation**

As the team had previously agreed to carry out Stage Two conferencing with students at C level (7.6.1), a quick analysis of a possible third teacher to do this revealed various possibilities. At the same time, colleagues who had previously assisted with this study, such as Medine and Devrim, (see table 8a below) were not currently teaching writing. Rather than putting together a letter of invitation to all possible teachers, for convenience I opted to invite Ece Gönçer. This letter (Appendix I) was the third occasion on which I had had to put together a suitable invitation. See Appendix B for the first; the second letter given to Seda and Nazli and referred to in 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 was lost. Whereas the first invitation was to solicit interest in group and individual interviews concerning feedback provision at IYTE, both the second and third assumed more importance as the outcome would greatly affect the study in that the absence of a sufficient number of participants may have reduced data available.

### **8.4 Invitations and Face**

Bearing in mind the initial refusal to participate by both Seda and Nazli in the earliest stages of this study (5.5.2) I put together another letter (Appendix I) which I felt was less formal and less face-threatening. As Ece was a younger and less experienced colleague than most others in the department I felt it important for her not to feel she was obliged to participate. I assured her in

this letter that she could decline with no loss of face. Ece agreed to join the team for Stage Two conferencing and thus became the seventh teacher at IYTE to participate. At this point, half-way through the study, five current colleagues at IYTE were familiar with the ongoing work explained thus far in this thesis. Two who were the most familiar, Eylem and Ömer, had by now taken up teaching positions elsewhere. (Nihat soon after made this figure three; see 8.6 for details). This was an indication of how long-term studies such as this thesis represents may be affected by such attrition, a factor which reflects the degree of mobility the language teaching profession currently enables in the higher education sector in Turkey.

**Table 8a: teacher participants in this study**

<b>Year one:</b> Group and individual interview participants	Devrim Akkaya; Eylem Mersin; Medine Şahin; Nihat Kocyiğit; Ömer Eşit
<b>Year two:</b> Stage One conference participants	Nihat Kocyiğit; Ömer Eşit; Seda Bütün
<b>Year three:</b> Stage Two conference participants	Ece Gönçer; Seda Bütün; Wayne Trotman

## **8.5 The new AR team member**

Ece was currently in the middle of her second year at IYTE and teaching a writing class for the second time. Rather than take her through the study up to this point, and perhaps imposing my own views of events, I referred her to relevant parts. Ece was able to construct for herself a view of conferencing which would become more developed during and after her Stage Two

conferences. Her analysis of how far she implemented conferencing features is outlined in chapters ten to twelve.

## **8.6 AR team meeting and issues**

The new AR team, which now consisted of myself, Ece and Seda, met and reflected on how to plan and carry out Stage Two conferencing in order to generate further data for us to analyse. Prior to this meeting and with the permission of other members involved I had also provided Ece with transcripts of Stage One conferences plus the list of points illustrated in 6.4, of desirable features of conferencing. As my aim was to engender a more collaborative relationship within the team, at this meeting I encouraged Seda (and later Nihat) to share their current construction of conferencing with Ece. Later discussion with Ece on this point indicated that no such sharing of ideas took place, and on reflection I should perhaps have organised a meeting to pursue this.

I was later informed by the Director of Studies that Nihat would be away from IYTE, working on his own PhD, and would thus not be able to carry out Stage Two conferences. As mentioned in 8.2, Nihat soon after left IYTE, which meant following the planning and intervention stages there would still be six Stage Two conference transcripts for subsequent analysis. As two of these transcripts were of myself conferencing I believed it was vital to develop strategies to avoid dominating future meetings and making decisions on an independent basis. Due to time constraints, and not wishing to put undue pressure on teachers with busy work and personal schedules, this was not

always possible. The latter point was increasingly borne in mind during the transcript analysis outlined in chapters nine to twelve. When I had to make unilateral decisions, they were based on the fact that the responsibility for the outcome of the study would ultimately be my own.

### **8.7 Writing task decisions**

Both Seda and Ece were proactive concerning the essay title selection, coming to me with their suggestions, and as a team we agreed to ask students selected to write about the same topic – Road Safety - in problem-solution format. As the academic writing syllabus at IYTE currently outlined, this would involve writing three separate paragraphs totalling 120-180 words. The essay would firstly outline the problem, i.e. why and for whom road safety was a problem. This would be followed by a body paragraph containing at least three solutions, written up as type two conditionals and containing the consequences of each solution, and finally a conclusion in which the writer would choose the most suitable solution from those they had provided and explain reasons for this choice. Should readers of this thesis require them, the six essays and accompanying follow-up drafts are available in pdf format on CD on request.

### **8.8 Student selection**

From my own class, prior to writing the essay I had chosen Ceylin and Gülen, two C group students with whom to carry out my first conference as part of this study. Ece had also chosen her students prior to writing. In contrast, Seda



informed me that she had selected hers after looking at the essays her whole class had produced.

In order to prevent them from developing a feeling of being used, I felt it was important to write a letter to each student requesting their consent to participate and to explain why they were being asked to do so. (Appendix J). I later felt it was important to point out to all six students concerned that although we were grateful for their participation, this did not mean they would receive privileged treatment. On reflection I later felt it would have been advisable, so as to avoid any possible impression of favouritism, to also explain this point to the classes from which the six students had been selected. It is interesting to compare 8.7 and 8.8 with 5.7 and 5.8, since both cover the same topics of student and task selection.

### **8.9 Planning Stage Two conferencing**

After looking at the list of desirable conferencing features (6.4) we had discussed as a team in a previous meeting (8.6), at our next meeting we discussed how to approach the essays prior to Stage Two conferencing. Firstly, we agreed to photocopy the original essays, provide line numbers for ease of reference, then highlight and number problematic areas for our students to work on for a few days prior to the conference. In this way both teachers and students would be reasonably clear at the outset on what the conference would deal with. In fact, as well as highlighting on the original draft, teachers also tended to correct. On reflection, a fuller discussion with much more clarification might have aided the study at this point.

Secondly, and in contrast to Stage One conferences which took place in teachers' offices and were recorded on what in hindsight the AR team considered fairly unreliable audio technology, the six Stage Two conferences took place in a suitably quiet seminar room. They were each recorded on a digital voice recorder with an unobtrusive internal microphone. Table 8b illustrates the participants, while more details may be found in table 9a in the following chapter. Digital recordings of Stage Two conferences enabled transcribing to be carried out much more efficiently, due in particular to the ease with which it was possible to move around the recording using on-screen sound files. Linking this to 5.5.2 on the quality of transcripts of Stages One and Two conferencing, this I believe was further evidence of my personal development throughout this study as a researcher.

**Table 8b: Stage Two conferencing participants**

Teacher	Students
Ece Gönçer	Alpay Kaptas Ekrem Sahin
Seda Butun	Fatih Temizsu Sevda Yildirim
Wayne Trotman	Gulen Ekim Ceylin Atikoglu

### **8.10 Preview of Stage Two conference analysis**

Stage Two conferencing took place during the second semester of the third year of this study. Points raised by the process of transcribing in chapter five were borne in mind. The next phase of this study involved analysing the six transcripts in order to detect which features the current AR team had, by studying the list in 6.4, been able to take on board from Stage One

conferencing and implement in Stage Two conferencing. The following chapter of this thesis outlines this analysis, one which not only functions as a stage labelled by Burns (2005) as observing, but also represents a further MCA.

### **8.12 Reflexive summary for MCA Two**

MCA two covered both chapters seven and eight in this study, and on reflection involved unexpected issues that led to major changes to the structure of the AR team as both Omer and Nihat departed. Whereas prior to this point the team had been male-dominated, with the inclusion of Ece it now became female dominant, yet led by a male. Whereas the team had previously consisted of only teachers with a vast amount of experience both at IYTE and terms of teaching in an EAP environment, the inclusion of Ece (in her second year at IYTE and her fifth year of teaching) altered the balance. It should also be noted that at this point that, while Seda was a married woman, Ece was still single. As a married, relatively much older colleague, I thus felt it prudent not to be seen together alone in offices with doors closed as we analysed data.

Other significant issues we noted on reflection were how what we had previously termed a 'framework' suggested by Burns (2005) was adapted. This was an early indication of an interrelation between what for the purposes of the study we had labelled 'stages', and which form the headings of several chapters. Also of note was that the team now felt students at C group levels could be invited to the study.

### **8.13 Chapter summary**

This chapter has outlined how I believed the Burns (2005) framework required adapting in order to generate further data with which to proceed in this study. It also outlined why and how changes were required in the make-up of the AR team along with how issues were dealt with prior to Stage two conferencing. It also marked the end of a second MCA in the overall analysis stage of Burns (2005).

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Observing: MCAs Three and Four**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

While chapters seven and eight outlined how the study involved a second MCA, this chapter concerns further analysis of data, that of transcripts arising from the six Stage Two conferences that had taken place. At the same time it performs the function of the observing stage of Burns (2005). The chapter thus illustrates analyses of the intervention in order to observe the outcome. It also functions as a third and fourth MCA.

The main aim of this chapter is to assess firstly how successfully the current AR team, consisting of myself, Ece and Seda, were able to implement features of conferencing which, from our analysis in chapter six and listed in 6.4, had been designated as desirable. In a change from our original idea, a secondary aim was to detect the degree to which features we had designated as undesirable still remained. The outcome of our respective analyses, we believed, would enable us to measure how possible it had been to implement the framework suggested by Burns (2005) and engage in AR on EFL writing in order for teacher-development to take place in terms of improvements in individual constructions of how conferencing would relate to the development of teacher-knowledge. Box 9a indicates the current stage of the study. The second part of this chapter illustrates how this study changed its focus and continued by focusing solely on alterations made in follow-up drafts based on conference input.

### Box 9a: Burns (2005): observing

exploring → identifying → planning → data collecting → analysing / reflecting  
→ hypothesising / speculating → intervening → **observing** → reporting →  
writing → presenting

## 9.2 Observation aims

On Stage One conferencing transcripts the previous AR team of Nihat, Ömer and Seda had, by adapting Boyatzis (1998) and with my assistance, identified categories that appeared significant to us. With the same team we followed this by analysing the discourse within these categories. As a result, at the current juncture of the study the team had two categories to identify: desirable and undesirable conferencing features. These consisted of twelve itemised points (6.4). This next involved analysing transcripts from Stage Two conferencing (Appendix K) to observe whether and how most of the features had been implemented. 9.3.1 explains how we worked independently and reached agreement on identifiable parts of transcripts.

As stated in 9.1, we believed the extent to which desirable features were adopted and implemented would indicate the degree of teacher development it was possible to achieve in this AR study in terms of reading previously created teacher-knowledge, acting upon it and noticing the outcome. Accompanying the two aims outlined in 9.1, another was to detect any newly-introduced features that could be perceived as desirable, thus combining teacher-knowledge with teacher-development. The latter point is an indication

of how the three levels on which this thesis works combined as one, i.e. action research on conferencing resulting in teacher development / knowledge. This relationship is illustrated in table 13b in 13.2.1b.

### **9.3.1 Identifying parts of the conference**

As previously mentioned in 8.6, due to time constraints and for practical purposes, for the first step of our analysis and observation I made the decision to deal with transcripts individually. At this point, believing my Stage Two conference with Gülen (Appendix K) was the shortest of the six transcripts available, and also feeling it would be more practical from a research point of view to work from shorter to longer data, I met Ece and Seda separately and asked them to work independently to locate where they and I felt identifiable parts in the conference transcript seemed to occur. I felt the establishment of clear parts, where possible, would enable us to carry out our individual analyses of the transcript more efficiently. Such identification was not always so easy. For transcript two, for example, we found this impossible.

Following the above meetings, there was mutual agreement among the team that five clear parts appeared to occur in Stage Two transcript One. For ease of reference and analysis, I next separated and copied parts of the transcript that corresponded to parts of the conference. As Appendix K shows, turns 1-11 represented part one; 12-45, part two; 46-76, part three; 77-107, part four; 108-111, part five.

### **9.3.2 Analysis preparation**

Prior to Stage Two conferencing we had read together and discussed the twelve points in 6.4. I then copied the list of points from 6.4 indicating desirable conferencing features for Ece, Seda and myself to work from during our individual analyses. At later individual meetings with both Ece and Seda, during which I presented them with firstly a letter of thanks for their continued participation (Appendix L) along with copies of the relevant data, we agreed to analyse each of the five parts we had identified and to observe and comment on how far we each felt I had carried out my first Stage Two conference based on the view of conferencing I had thus far constructed and in relation to the features listed in 6.4.

We began with analysing the transcript of myself conferencing with Gülen. This transcript consisted of 111 turns and lasted 9 minutes and 32 seconds. After tabulating details of all six conferences I realised that although it had been the first to take place, this conference was not in fact the shortest. The full list of the six conferences appears below in table 9a in the order in which they were carried out.



**Table 9a: Stage Two conferencing data**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Minutes / seconds</b>	<b>Turns</b>
1. Wayne	Gulen	9.30	111
2. Wayne	Ceylin	8.00	83
3. Ece	Alpay	18.30	151
4. Ece	Ekrem	6.30	80
5. Seda	Fatih	15.45	148
6. Seda	Sevda	16.00	182

I once again realised that making unilateral decisions did not fully reflect the ethos of an AR study. All later decisions concerning the choice of transcripts to analyse and how to do so were made as a team, and after referring to the information in table 9b. It is perhaps interesting to note here that, although the team had discussed keeping the conferences to a reasonable length, i.e. one which would enable a teacher in normal circumstances to deal with several conferences at one sitting if necessary, only I did so. Ece, after I had discussed the matter with her, succeeded in her second, while Seda believed 15-16 minutes was necessary on each occasion. Appendix F shows how in her first conference, during Stage One, Seda had also required 15 minutes, but had followed this in her second by one of 6 minutes. From a researcher perspective, this study revealed that when adequate transcription is the aim, such lengthy conferences tend to consume valuable research time, although from a pedagogical perspective longer conferences are to be encouraged.

#### **9.4 Team analysis of conference one data: introduction**

As it would involve a good deal of close reading of transcripts and criteria, I personally felt this would be the most time-consuming and challenging period of this study. I therefore decided to approach it with a good deal of flexibility, understanding that although I personally had a more direct interest in the outcome of the study, both Seda and Ece, apart from analysing transcripts, had to prioritise personal and professional issues. In spite of this, and although it was not my original intention, several useful research discussions took place between us concerning our various analyses and conclusions concerning conference one data.

Although I felt it was inappropriate to provide them with strict deadlines, after a week neither Seda nor Ece had returned to me with their own analysis. In order to create a little impetus, to assist them with their work on Transcript One I provided them with an early sketch of my own analysis, indicating how I had gone about locating points listed in 6.4. Although it would appear that busy AR team members such as those in this study perhaps require assistance at key moments, it should be pointed out that, in order not to unduly influence the outcome, any such guidance needs to be limited. My limited assistance appeared to work, and soon after I was able to discuss Seda's and Ece's analyses with them. This was, though, an early indication of the problems involved in getting the team to analyse individually.

The analysis described below (9.5) is firstly that of my own. Following that (9.6) is Seda's analysis which, based on her notes, I wrote up and which she

later read and agreed with. The third (9.7), for which I did the same, is Ece's analysis. My account of my own analysis of conference one data is written in more detail. My account of Seda's analysis is written in a longer explanatory style than that for Ece's analysis; this reflects the notes I was able to work from at the time. With regard to my own personal research interest in teacher provision of praise during this period, I have, in 9.5.3 and 9.5.4, also related certain features of my own analysis of this data to Hyland and Hyland (2006), although for the current phase neither Seda nor Ece were asked to do so.

## 9.5 Analysis of conference one data by Wayne: Introduction

Appendix K is available on request should the reader wish to check any aspect of the following analysis. I have divided the analysis into parts in order to facilitate this. Extracts from the transcript there appear below as they were transcribed; normal rules of punctuation do not apply. The three analyses below were also written in the order they were carried out. Table 9b illustrates the outcome of my analysis.

**Table 9b: Transcript one analysis data: Wayne**

Point number	Point description	Occurrences
6.4.4	error correction	5
6.4.10	teacher questioning	4
6.4.5	praise / mitigating	3
6.4.11	comments instructions for revision	3
6.4.3	discourse markers	2
6.4.6	providing examples	1

6.4.1	Background / overview	1
6.4.7	pronoun choice	1
6.4.9	teacher pause	1
	Total	<b>21</b>

### **9.5.1 Part one: turns 1-11**

My analysis of part one reveals evidence of three features from the list provided in 6.4. Firstly it appears to serve as an overview of Gulen's essay. At the same time, within this overview, praise is a dominant feature. To expand upon this: part one firstly illustrates providing conference background / overview and how teachers in Stage One conferencing provided praise. A closer analysis of part one reveals how, in turn 1, I open with strong praise, using the word 'excellent'. With reference to Hyland and Hyland (2006b: 210-211), such praise was here followed by no immediate mitigation strategy. Also within this part is possible evidence of marking sections of the essay in order to clarify matters for conference participants.

There is also evidence of teacher-questioning, as I probe Gülen on why she might feel I believed the work was praiseworthy. Her attempts to suggest reasons reflects the difficulty of such a question which, as I then answer myself, illustrates a feature previously designated as undesirable. I provide more specific praise in turn 7 when focusing on global aspects of her work. As a section it therefore builds up the praise, especially in turns 1 and 11, between which I use the word 'excellent' four times. Evidence is also present of how, in turn 5, I pause in the conference to allow Gülen to structure and/or extend her response.

### **9.5.2 Part two: turns 11-45**

This part, consisting of 35 turns and beginning with the continuation of turn 11 from part one, begins with 'however there are some small points' which represents a mitigation feature following the praise referred to above in turn 1. The criticism to come is preceded by requesting the student to identify shortcomings in the writing; this illustrates another mitigation feature: interrogative form. The interrogatives of turn 11, 'why do you think this is a problem', and turn 15, 'do you think it's necessary', are followed by mitigation in my hedging comments in turn 17: 'maybe you could think about...maybe changing it or taking it out'. My use of the phrase 'however there are some small points' (turn 11) (which almost directly reflects that made by Seda in 6.3.5.2, where she firstly praises then adds '..but of course there are some points') is an example of a paired comment mitigation feature, although the start and end of the comment occur in turns 1 and 11 respectively. This part contains three examples of teacher-questioning: turn 11. 'why do you think this is a problem'; turn 25: 'what do you think the problem is there'; turn 39: 'which verb do you think is more suitable'. These further illustrate teacher-questioning, which in this case helped elicit from Gulen the correct item, 'worldwide'.

#### **9.5.2.1 Additional desirable features**

Two other features established in this particular section, but not actually categorised in 6.4, illustrate how valuable they could be for conferencing. These had been discussed prior to any conferencing, and were clearly implemented. The first concerned providing the student with a copy of draft

one of the work annotated by the teacher's written feedback. Gülen shows in turn 26 how, prior to the conference and with such a copy, she had been able to establish the correct form of 'nobody can deal with this problem'. The issue of annotated drafts later became an issue in this study. Further work concerning changes made by students in follow-up drafts appears later in this chapter and in particular in chapters ten to twelve, where it became the main focus of this study. The second related to how the team had agreed to number each line on the student's work. Our analysis showed how useful this had been as it enabled us to identify more clearly, both prior to and during the conference, specific aspects for the student to work on. This was another example of members of the new AR team building on knowledge accrued by the previous team, and another indication (previously mentioned in 9.3) of how this study was once more functioning on the three levels: action research, conferencing and teacher development/knowledge.

### **9.5.3 Part three: turns 45-76**

With the choice of 'let's', I noted how I signalled to the Gulen how the conference was a collaborative event; this illustrates pronoun choice. In the same turn, 'let's look at the body paragraph,' the use of conference discourse markers is evident, indicating to Gulen the focus for the conference.

I noted how I persuaded Gülen to state or show examples of conditionals, thus illustrating eliciting. 'That's fine but I think you should choose type one or type two. is an example of praise with mitigation, this time of what Hyland and Hyland (2006b: 211) list as a paired comment, which involves a suggestion.

There is further evidence of error correction; turn 68 consists of teacher-location of the error, but leaving the student to work on it. This turn also contains an instruction for revision. Turn 70 illustrates examples of firstly teacher-location of error, then teacher-location of error followed up by student-repair of that error.

#### **9.5.4 Part four: turns 77-107**

This part begins with two examples of the mitigation strategy of what Hyland and Hyland (2006b: 211) categorise as 'personal attribution'. The first, which is in the continuation of turn 76 is 'I think you should look at..'. Turn 80, 'I think you need something here' may also be an example of such a mitigation feature. Turn 86 shows how I provided examples for Gulen to focus on and choose from. While turns 86-87 illustrate a clear example of eliciting, in turn 96 I once more ask a question before becoming categorical. Turn 88 illustrates teacher-questioning, while turn 102 illustrates an instruction for revision: 'go and look in a dictionary and find a better word for..'. Turn 104 illustrates eliciting the answer from the student, but in fact concludes with answering my own question, an example of an undesirable conferencing feature.

#### **9.5.5 Part five: turns 108-111**

In this part there is the beginning of an instruction for revision, although due to concluding the conference with joint laughter the actual instruction does not appear. Although it may be a useful idea to end the conference on such a warm note, instructions for revision should not be ignored, while either

providing summaries for the student, or asking the student to summarise the main points to work on, are also to be recommended.

#### **9.5.6 Absent features**

As is perhaps to be expected since Turkish is not my L1, negotiation in the L1, point 6.4.8, did not appear in the transcript. On reflection, as my Turkish is by no means limited, I see no reason why I or speakers of other languages should not revert to the students' L1. Concerning points 6.4.12, we noted that this could not be outlined without analysing both the transcript and both drafts of the student's work. The same applied to 6.4.2, which refers to the number of points to deal with. Based on my own analysis, and prior to analyses by Seda and Ece, I decided that, for the moment, since both points involved a good deal extra work, it would be more practical to limit our analyses at this juncture to all points in 6.4 apart from limiting the number of points to deal with (6.4.2) and analysing follow-up drafts (6.4.12). In the following sections in this particular chapter, conference one data was analysed by the team in relation to ten of the twelve features in 6.4. Chapters ten to twelve outline how comparing alterations made in follow-up drafts became the major focus in this study.

#### **9.6 Analysis of conference one data by Seda: Introduction**

Repeating an earlier comment concerning my recording of research interviews throughout this study (7.2), Seda requested that the meeting to discuss her analysis not be recorded. For her account below I have worked from her notes written on her copy of the transcript plus those I made during



our interview concerning her comments. Table 9c illustrates the outcome of Seda's analysis.

**Table 9c: Transcript one analysis data: Seda**

Feature number	Feature description	Occurrences
6.4.4	error correction	4
6.4.5	praise / mitigating comments	3
6.4.3	discourse markers	2
6.4.10	teacher questioning	2
6.4.9	teacher pause	2
6.4.6	providing examples	1
6.4.11	Instructions for revision	1
6.4.9	pronoun choice	1
		<b>Total: 16</b>

### **9.6.1 Part one: turns 1-11**

In part one, which she had labelled 'introduction', Seda noted how I praised in turn 1 but also tried to elicit why the essay was worthy of praise. Seda also noted how I provided further praise in turn 11.

### **9.6.2 Part two: turns 11-45**

Seda noted in part two how I tried to elicit and 'make the student locate the error and correct it'; this indicates how she noted an example in turn 17 of error correction. Seda also noted how my pauses in turn 21 had assisted this. In my analysis (9.5) I had not noted this as an example of pausing. Seda noted how in turn 23 my use of 'maybe' left it to the student to decide on the correct course of action. Although not specifically itemised in 6.4, this is an

example of avoiding appropriating the student's work, which we believed should count as an additional desirable conferencing feature.

In turn 25 Seda noted an example of teacher-questioning. In turn 29 she noted another example of praise in 'I like this sentence', plus in turn 39 'which verb do you think is more suitable' - she noted eliciting. In my own analysis (9.5.2) I had noted the latter as questioning. This was an early example of how turns may be interpreted by teachers in different ways and how categories needed further refining. These issues are further discussed in 9.11

#### **9.6.3 Part three: turns 45-76**

In turn 45 Seda noted the use of the pronoun that 'made the conference more interactive. In the same turn she also noted how throughout this part I had tried to 'make Gülen understand herself that she should use all type one or all type two' (conditionals).

#### **9.6.4 Part four: turns 77-107**

In turn 86 Seda detected my pausing in order to encourage Gülen to contribute to the conference and how in turn 90 how I had suggested something I wished Gülen to think about.

#### **9.6.5 Part five: turns 108-111**

Seda identified turn 108 as an instruction for revision. In contrast, 9.5.5 indicates how I had noted this as illustrating a partial instruction to revise.

### **9.6.6 Absent features**

As mentioned in 9.5.7, no exchanges in the L1 took place (6.4.8). Disregarding this plus both 6.4.8 and 6.4.12, the only feature Seda did not locate in Transcript One was an example of 6.4.1 – the provision of background.

## **9.7 Analysis of conference one data by Ece: Introduction**

Following my discussion with Seda (9.6) I next recorded an interview with Ece. From the recording, plus her notes on the transcript and follow-up draft, I wrote up a first account of her analysis. Ece later read but initially disagreed that my account was an accurate representation of her views. In fact, as the following section explains, eventually Ece agreed to work on this data three times, a factor which indicated her current degree of interest, involvement and commitment to the study. Such concern for detail was reciprocated by my helping with editing her book review for IATEFL Voices. Ece's commitment to the study is further explained in chapters eleven and twelve since, following Seda's departure, she and I carried out separate and, later on, joint analyses of conferencing data.

Ece had found her initial analysis a time-consuming task, and my reading of her notes revealed why. She had firstly read the summary of features in 6.4 and, to clarify and assist her analysis, made her own brief notes of the nine relevant categories there, along with explanations; these usually consisted of four or five words. One example of this was her précis for 6.4.5: 'praise and

mitigation ('softening the effect of criticism'). As she worked through the transcript she ticked off on this separate sheet whether she had detected evidence of each of the categories. Below her notes she also added her own reflections and questions as she did so. Unlike Seda, however, Ece had not, as I had earlier requested her to do so, indicated specific examples on the transcript of where she felt each feature had occurred. On my request, after pointing out the necessity for this, but without any assistance by me, she was able to do this in her second analysis. It was only after working together on what was her third analysis, however, that Ece and I were able to agree. This contrasts with Seda, who agreed first time. Table 9d illustrates the outcome of Ece's analysis.

**Table 9d: conference one data analysis: Ece**

<b>Feature number</b>	<b>Feature description</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>
6.4.10	teacher questioning	12
6.4.4	error correction	9
6.4.5	Praise	6
6.4.11	instructions for revision	4
6.4.3	discourse markers	2
6.4.1	background / overview	1
6.4.7	Pronoun	1
6.4.9	Teacher pause	1
		<b>Total: 36</b>

### **9.7.1 Part one: turns 1-11**

In part one Ece located two examples of praise, in turns 1 and 11 respectively. She also located one example of providing background in turn 9.

Along with this she noted a single example of pausing in turn five and questioning in turn 3.

#### **9.7.2 Part two: turns 11-45**

In part two Ece located one example of helpful discourse markers in turn 45, four examples of encouraging self-correction in turns 29, 31-33, 37, and 39-41. She noted three examples of praise in turns 29, 43 and 45, three examples of questioning in turns 11, 15 and 25, and finally two examples of instructions for follow-up drafts in turns 17 and 43.

#### **9.7.3 Part three: turns 45-76**

In part three Ece located one example of helpful discourse markers in turn 45, one of encouraging self-correction in turn 70, one of suitable pronoun choice in turn 45, five examples of questioning in turns 45, 55, 57, 59 and 64 respectively, plus one of instructions for follow-up drafts in turn 68.

#### **9.7.4 Part four: turns 77-107**

In part four Ece noted four examples of encouraging self-correction in turns 86, 90, 98 and 106; one example of praise in turn 80; three examples of questioning in turns 96 and 104, and one example of instructions for follow-up drafts in turn 102.

#### **9.7.5 Part five: turns 108-111 (no features noted)**

### **9.7.6 Absent features**

Disregarding features referred to in 9.5.7, Ece was only unable to locate examples of 6.4.6, providing examples.

## **9.8 Summary of analysis**

Three teachers analysed data pertaining to conference one, and found varying totals of examples of the current ten relevant features in 6.4. These totals were: Wayne 21; Seda 16; Ece 36. As previously indicated, there was no evidence of one feature (6.4.8) and examples of two other features were not sought at this stage. The clearest fact revealed by data in table 9e is that error correction dominates overall, while teacher questioning is also prevalent, followed by praise / mitigation comments, then instructions for revision and discourse markers.

### **9.8.1 Dominant and less dominant features**

Looking at the most dominant features reveals how, in each of the three analyses more than one example of each feature was noted in five cases. The five features agreed largely, apart from teacher pause in Ece's. It is also interesting to note how these dominant five embrace 64 of the 73 examples noted. The data may reflect the fact that some features of 6.4 may have been written up more clearly, or were felt by teachers to be more important or easier to implement, or that teachers in conferences tend to prioritise such features. Similarly, for features tending to occur much less often, this may reflect on the criteria, the difficulty with implementation, or that teachers do not prioritise them. There is no sense in which it has been assumed that all the

features identified in this study are equally important, and perhaps such data as the above gives some clues about which might be more important in practice.

**Table 9e: overall analysis: conference one features noted**

Feature number	Feature description	Occurrences		
		WT	SD	ECE
6.4.4	error correction	5	4	9
6.4.10	teacher questioning	4	4	12
6.4.5	praise/mitigating	3	3	6
6.4.11	comments	3	1	4
	instructions for revision			
6.4.3	discourse markers	2	2	2
6.4.6	providing examples	1	1	0
6.4.1	background / overview	1	0	1
6.4.7	pronoun choice	1	1	1
6.4.9	teacher pause	1	2	1
	Total	21	16	36

From table 9e since error-correction and teacher-questioning are clearly the most prevalent features appearing, and that praise, discourse markers and instructions for revision are also present, we can thus say at this point of the study that five of the nine categories of desirable discourse features from 6.4 tend to dominate.

### 9.8.2 Analysis of praise

Since error correction and teacher questioning would take up considerably more time, and because I had a current research interest in the area, I decided to analyse how the three of us had provided praise. I noted how I had located three examples of where I had provided praise, in turns 1 and 11 in part one, in turn 1 in part two, and in turn 62 in part three. Seda also located three examples, agreeing with my interpretation in turns 1 and 11, but also noting an example in turn 29 'what you said is better Ece located six

examples, and like Seda, agreed with the function of turns 1 and 11, and also agreed with Seda that turn 29 functioned as praise. Ece also noted turns 43 and 45 as praise, along with turn 80. The point here is that in relation to some of our points in 6.4, agreement is perhaps more easily reached.

### **9.9 Examples of undesirable features**

I noted how, inadvertently, I had introduced what the Stage One team had noted as undesirable conferencing features. In two instances, in part one and part four (9.5.1 and in 9.5.4), I answered my own question. Neither Seda nor Ece had noted this.

### **9.10 Points of note**

We noted how we would not expect pronoun choice and providing background to be present throughout the whole of the conference, but would expect to see more cases of pauses in order for the student to contribute, and for teachers to provide more examples. We felt this might be due to teachers finding it uncomfortable to pause, since the discourse feature of pausing is normally filled by the teacher in such unequal power relationships. As a team we felt it would be interesting to note on future transcripts if and how pauses occurred and if and how examples were provided.

### **9.11 Analysis problems**

As certain points tend to combine, merge or overlap, it was not always easy to identify exactly which points to place in a particular category. To resolve this issue Ece later mentioned how error correction could be broken into teacher-



correction and eliciting. We also noted how some features such as error-correction take place over several turns (61-66); thus Ece had noted many examples of this that we later felt had to be disregarded. As was the case when producing transcripts of Stages One and Two conferencing, revisiting enabled the team to locate examples of points in 6.4 previously unnoticed. Such refinements of analysis further illustrate researcher and teacher development throughout this study.

### **9.12 Post analysis interviews: introduction**

Whereas the above dealt with analysis of the data and related issues, at this point I felt it would be useful to discuss our work thus far. To do so, following my write-up of the teams' observations I provided both Seda and Ece with a copy of this as it then stood, (containing all data prior to 9.10 above) requesting they read it and perhaps add comments concerning accuracy or otherwise, plus anything they may have noted within the data we had produced. I provided a one-week deadline for Seda and Ece to do this, after which, as my diary records show, I spoke to them both separately. Even with such a small team, due to vastly different teaching schedules, finding time for both Ece and Seda to meet with me at the same time was an ongoing issue throughout this study.

#### **9.12.1 Ece**

In my follow-up interview with Ece she pointed out what she believed were shortcomings, firstly in the criteria we had each applied to conference one data, providing me with annotated notes on how she felt they might be re-

written. This was another clear example of how a team member had reflected in order to re-create knowledge that had originally been created by teachers as a result of post Stage One conferencing.

### **9.12.2 Refocusing the study**

Ece also requested for the next conference to see drafts one and two of the students' essays. This she suggested would be to analyse how far the discourse in the conference had influenced the work in the student's follow-up draft. It was in fact my intention that as a team we should from then on do so, and I agreed this would be valuable to the study. It is a further example of Ece's proactivity and how she had followed her analysis with reflection and then realisation of how the study was currently perhaps falling short, and how the analysis might further enlighten us as researchers. As chapters ten to twelve illustrate, analysis of transcripts and their possible relationship with drafts one and two formed not only the next phase of our analysis, but were the dominant feature for the remainder of this study.

### **9.12.3 Seda**

In my interview with Seda I expressed how, considering her workload, I felt she had become much more central to this study than I had originally anticipated. Due to staff shortages Seda was at this juncture extremely busy and unable to comment on Ece's suggestions for alterations to be made to the criteria in 6.4 following our analyses of Transcript One. Seda also explained how, currently, she was finding participation in this study of little interest. She was, however, still willing to assist as much as possible until its completion.

She ended by admitting she felt she was slowing the study down, a point with which I partially concurred, but still emphasised the importance of her continued efforts and conclusions. As a team we later discussed ways of making the study of more direct interest while involving us in less analysis. At a later point I felt it unethical to allow Seda to participate in this study as she was clearly find it a chore. As a result, I put together a letter (11.2) requesting she indicate her degree of commitment to the study. At the same time this letter offered her a means of opting out of the study.

### **9.13 Essay drafts one and two analysis**

The following section of this chapter deals with further analysis of conference one data, this time in order to detect how far the features outlined above had led to alterations and improvements on the students' follow-up draft. It is thus a further MCA, and possibly even a mini-cycle within another MCA within the main analysis.

I thus next copied draft one, the pre-conference teacher-annotated draft, and the follow-up draft of Gulen's essay, and gave copies to Ece and Seda, explaining what we were about to do. In individual meetings I also provided them with firstly copies of the transcript of the conference, plus the list of categories of conferencing features, along with copies of their own accounts of how they had noted the extent to which I had been able to implement these desirable features.

### **9.13.1 Analysis of Gulen's draft one and two: introduction**

The section below primarily outlines my own analysis of how Gulen dealt with her second draft following her conference with me, which dealt with points indicated on her annotated draft for her to work on prior to this. I have also added comments made by Ece and Seda based on their individual analyses. Where possible, I have indicated my early perceptions of relationships between alterations made by Gulen on her follow-up draft that were based on desirable conferencing features listed in 6.4 and which appeared in the conference. As this study progressed, in line with working in the constructivist paradigm, the team became increasingly cautious with regard to such cause-effect relationships.

#### **Point one**

Turns 11 – 24 deal with working on 'in the world,' a typical Turkish writer error. To give the reader an idea of how the process of analysis worked at this point I have included extract 9a. To simplify matters, for all remaining points I have illustrated in table 9f what took place and added brief accounts of this.

The extract begins with open-ended teacher-questioning: 'why do you think this is a problem' (turn 11), which places the onus on Gulen, then proceeds to a more direct question prior to my suggestion (turn 17) of 'maybe you could think,' which functions as an eliciting move and results in Gulen providing two alternatives: 'entire world' and 'whole world'. Gulen, however, ignored both alternatives and instead opted for another correct form – 'worldwide', which

was not one of the options discussed and perhaps suggests she looked elsewhere.

**Extract 9a: Appendix K:**

- 11 Wayne:** that's excellent..and then there's the conclusion.. so I think ..as an essay it's excellent..however there are some small points.. why do you think this is a problem..? number one (indicating line one)
- 12 Gülen:** why do you think this is a problem? (reads line one: traffic accidents are increasing gradually in the world?)
- 13 Wayne:** mm..this part's ok.. this part's good.. this..especially this word (pointing to 'gradually')
- 14 Gülen:** 'in the world?
- 15 Wayne:** do you think it's necessary (pointing to 'in the world')
- 16 Gülen:** no ...it's not necessary ...but er...I don't know
- 17 Wayne:** maybe you could think about..in the second draft think about ..maybe changing it or taking it out
- 18 Gülen:** ok. entire world.. is it ..er..used for.. in place of that?
- 19 Wayne:** that sounds better .. that sounds better
- 20 Gülen:** entire world?.
- 21 Wayne:** mm.. ok
- 22 Gülen:** whole world.?. or..
- 23 Wayne:** yeah, or maybe it's not necessary ..because everything is in the world
- 24 Gülen:** yes

**Table 9f: preliminary analysis procedure**

Point number	Nature of error	Conference treatment	Follow-up response
Two / three	this problem	none	nobody can solve
Four	Happen	eliciting	will go on happening
Five	work out this problem	instructions to revise	Solve

Six	way	none	suggestion
Seven and eight	less	eliciting	fewer
Nine	prefer	none	choose
Ten	on traffic	eliciting	in traffic
Eleven	inform	teacher-corrected	informed
Twelve	(missing phrase)	eliciting	a number of
Thirteen	use solutions	providing examples	consider solutions

### **Points two and three**

Gulen had clearly worked on this point prior to the conference, since in turn 28, following my prompting in turn 5, she immediately provides the correct form of ‘nobody can solve this problem This supports the idea of providing students with an annotated pre-conference draft for them to consider such problem areas, although once again such annotations may in fact be a limitation on the study, a point discussed in chapter thirteen.

### **Point four**

Gulen correctly suggests ‘occur’ as an alternative. I indicate the error is in fact in the verb form, emphasising (heard on the original recording) how ‘happen’ is the problem word. From this eliciting Gulen was able, in turn 35, to provide the correct form of ‘will go on happening

### **Point five**

Gulen provides three possible alternatives: in turn 42 she suggests ‘solve’; in turn 44 she offers: ‘or deal with.. or prevent an accident In the follow-up draft Gulen opted for ‘solve This was dealt with by an instruction for revision in turn

45: 'so in your second draft you can choose one of those It is perhaps the case that students require more explicit instructions on how to revise their work.

### **Point six**

In order to reduce the level of repetition in the text, in lines 10-11 Gulen has changed 'Another way to deal with the problem of roads', to 'Another useful suggestion to deal with this problem This suggests perhaps that students who know their work is going to be discussed in conference with the teacher are, perhaps in order to impress, motivated to work not only on parts indicated, but also on parts they realise on closer analysis (or perhaps after further learning) may improve the work. Gulen's manner of dealing with this point illustrates student-location and student correct.

### **Point seven and eight**

Gulen correctly changed 'less' to 'fewer Following this is a second example of a point not indicated in the pre-conference draft but in fact located and dealt with during the conference. I suggested in turn 75 that she look at 'fee'; this illustrates eliciting. In the follow-up draft Gulen inserted the incorrect 'pay'. I further realised that in such cases students should be encouraged to discuss and insert correct forms on pre-conference drafts actually during the actual conference.

**Point nine**

My failure to discuss point nine indicated on the annotated draft, one concerning Gulen's incorrect use of 'prefer,' illustrates another feature of conferencing, this time undesirable. Prior to the conference, however, Gulen has clearly worked on it, replacing 'prefer' with 'choose

**Point ten**

This dealt with altering an incorrect preposition and involved successful eliciting in line 17 of the pre-conference draft and over turns 85-88 in the transcript.

**Point eleven**

This illustrates in turns 90-92 an example of an undesirable feature since, when attempting to elicit the correct form of the verb 'inform', I in fact supplied the answer.

**Point twelve**

This indicates how Gulen has, when adding a previously taught structure, failed to insert 'the problem'. Negotiation takes place but is inconclusive, although the outcome was an improvement in her follow-up draft.

**Point thirteen**

My analysis of how I dealt with this point illustrates how I provided examples, but also the answer for Gulen; the latter was previously designated as an undesirable conferencing feature.



#### **9.14 Analysis by Ece**

As with my own analysis above, Ece compared drafts one and two by Gulen in order to note changes made or not made. Ece also noted features that she felt had been involved with points annotated on the pre-conferencing draft. It was not easy to write up an account of Ece's analysis as, on personal reflection, the transcript she had written on consisted of notes, reflecting the lack of a research focus involved. For future analysis I decided to provide more of a focus for our respective analyses; this is explained in 9.16 in relation to categories noted following the conclusion of our joint analyses of Gulen's work. Looking back, at the time of her analysis I feel I should have interviewed Ece on what she had meant, although by the current juncture the study had moved onto the AR team's analysis of further transcripts. I have therefore here limited the analysis made by Ece to what I believe were the three most relevant points.

#### **9.15 Analysis by Seda**

The same issue concerning a focus arose when I began to write up an account of Seda's analysis of alterations made or not made in Gulen's draft two following the conference. As with Ece above, I have limited my account to comments written by Seda. On the follow-up draft she had written: 'Use of articles hasn't been dealt with' and later 'The part that took up a third of the conference still comes up as a problem Concerning categories of features from 6.4 that she felt were involved in this conference, Seda had written how in relation to 6.4.2 (number of points to deal with): '(the conference) does not deal with all the points marked on Gulen's first draft equally '(It) deals too

much with types of if clauses And below this: (Wayne is) 'trying too hard to elicit. Is it really necessary?' In relation to 6.4.11 (Instructions for revision) Seda had written of this conference: 'Wayne successfully makes a suggestion to Gulen to go away and think about her writing On the transcript Seda had noted (at turn 70) how: 'Because of the over-emphasis on the use of if clauses, Wayne doesn't let the student discover the problem with 'the' and why it's a problem, so though the problem is solved in the second draft, has it been solved in the student's mind?' Such a comment, one clearly based on reflection on her conference, is of course a key issue concerning the provision of feedback of all types, and is discussed in chapter thirteen in relation to suggestions for further research. Seda also wrote how she felt the most successful aspect of the conference concerned 'encouraging the student to locate the error, giving her something to think about, and praising her.

### **9.16 Summary of analysis**

The above analyses by the AR team tend to indicate inconsistency in conferencing, since we appeared to have evidence of the following six categories emerging. In six cases, points were numbered on the annotated draft and dealt with successfully, in that the student was able to utilise them to improve the follow-up draft. This category may be sub-divided as follows: although points four, five, six and ten were improved directly as a result of the conference, in point one, the follow-up draft indicates success, although Gulen chose an alternative not discussed. Point two was dealt with prior to the conference. Points were numbered on the pre-conference draft and dealt with less successfully in that the student was unable to make suitable

improvements on the follow-up draft. In one case, (number nine) a point was listed to be dealt with on the annotated draft but was not dealt with during the conference. However, the follow-up draft indicates that Gulen had worked on this and made a successful alteration. In three cases points were dealt with during the conference that were not listed for discussion on the pre-conference draft, and which led to improvements or otherwise in the follow-up draft. These points were possibly noted during the conference. Examples include my pointing out the over-use of the definite article in turn 69, my dealing with Gulen's use of "you" (lines 18-21; turns 87-89). In these two cases the outcome in the follow-up draft were both successful alterations; a further example, my pointing out the incorrect word 'fee' in turn 75 led Gulen to use 'pay', another incorrect word (unsuccessful). A fifth category consists of points not noted for discussion in the conference, those that the teacher may for various reasons have overlooked. I had not noted any such instances in my analysis.

Another category may be discerned, that of undesirable conferencing techniques and how they affected the follow-up draft. Points 11 and 13 involved my providing answers. In the former this resulted in successful alterations, although for point 13 Gulen used a different word to the alternatives I had provided. These six descriptions of potential categories are each illustrated in table 9g.

### **9.17 Reflection on analysis and decisions for future action**

Showing a high degree of collaboration, at a meeting following my write-up of it all, and agreement by the team on how I reported the outcome of our respective analyses, we agreed that a lot of valuable research time and energy had been spent on just one of the six sets of conferencing data we had set out to analyse. Seda and Ece agreed with my point that our findings relating to how far I had been able to implement desirable features of conferencing in 6.4 had, in relation to time and energy, not proved either sufficiently revealing or interesting to suggest such a level of analysis should be carried out on the remaining. Instead, we agreed that it would be more useful to our study, and certainly less demanding, for the remaining five conferences to analyse drafts one and two along with the transcripts. This was in order to note alterations made and, as with the second part of our analysis of transcript one, try to note the degree to which certain conferencing features appeared to be involved in those alterations.

As we had previously agreed that we would analyse a conference carried out by her, during a further meeting with Ece she requested the three of us next analyse the transcript and drafts one and two of her and Ekrem, the second of her conferences. Previously she had suggested we look at her first conference (with Alpay), but on reflection she felt it was problematic in that he had not prepared for the conference, resulting in her having difficulties in dealing with his observations. We agreed it might be better to look at this later in the study.

### 9.18 Conferencing categories

The remaining conferencing data this study is concerned with was analysed in relation to how, with regard to alterations made by the student in the follow up draft, points noted by the teacher could be placed in the categories below in table 9g. As 9.16 indicates, the categories appeared following a desire to focus the study. As previously mentioned, the word 'successful' within the categories in table 9g is used in this study in a technical sense, rather than one based upon subjective value-judgements.

**Table 9g: designated categories of conferencing**

<b>Category 1</b>	<i>Points were noted on the pre-conference draft and dealt with successfully, in that the student was able to utilise them to make suitable improvements in the follow-up draft.</i>
<b>Category 2</b>	<i>Points were noted on the pre-conference draft and dealt with less successfully, in that the student was unable to utilise them to make suitable improvements in the follow-up draft.</i>
<b>Category 3</b>	<i>Points were noted to be dealt with on the pre-conference draft but were not dealt with during the conference.</i>
<b>Category 4</b>	<i>Points were dealt with during the conference that were not noted for discussion on the pre-conference draft, and which led to alterations in the follow-up draft. We noted that this category could be sub-divided into: a: point raised by the teacher during the conference, and b: points raised by the student during the conference.</i>
<b>Category 5</b>	<i>Points that the other teachers saw that had not been listed for treatment</i>
<b>Category 6</b>	<i>Undesirable conferencing techniques and how they affected the follow-up draft.</i>

Before proceeding to analyse conference two data we agreed as a team on the following action: as with conference one, the remaining five would

eventually be written up as joint analyses, noting agreement, conflicting ideas and related comments. We also agreed to note the use of categories of desirable conferencing features. We would work on seeing how far data in Transcripts Two to Six related to the six categories identified as a result of Transcript One analyses and how new categories might arise.

### **9.19 Reflexive summary for MCAs Three and Four**

This chapter illustrates two MCAs. Reflection indicating how the study was reaching stalemate led us to change the whole direction concerning our future analyses. The initial analysis which caused this feeling to emerge was MCA three, which reflected how far other team members and I myself felt I had been able to implement conferencing features. This we each felt was time-consuming and tiring. A key moment at the start of MCA four was our agreement that it would be more interesting, less time-consuming and more useful for all remaining conferences to analyse drafts one and two along with the transcripts, noting alterations and how the conference appeared to be involved in those alterations. Another significant realisation during MCA four was that we had begun to design our own analytical tools, which we later adapted and extended as the study proceeded.

### **9.20 Chapter summary**

This chapter has shown how the AR team carried out the observing stage of Burns (2005) framework. It has illustrated how the team analysed transcripts to detect previously listed features of conferencing. The second phase of this chapter, reflection on the analysis, provided more refined categories of

conferencing features. It also resulted in another set of categories in which to place action taken by teacher and student during and after the conference. At the same time it has further noted how mini-cycles tend to occur within the overall stage of analysis, and how on several occasions the three levels at which this thesis worked tend to be interrelated, i.e. how AR on conferencing data analysis resulted in teacher development / knowledge in the form of more informed conferencing.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **Observing and analysing: MCA Five**

#### **10.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter looked at how the AR team analysed the transcript of Stage Two conference one and related essay drafts. For the next phase of the study, which involved analysing data from the second conference, I provided Seda and Ece with copies of the transcript of Ece conferencing with Ekrem, along with copies of Ekrem's first draft and his follow-up draft. In contrast to my own conference with Gülen in the previous chapter, Ece had not numbered each point to discuss during the conference, but had instead highlighted areas for her and Ekrem to discuss.

It is important to note how analysis in the previous chapter had looked primarily at how far teachers were able to implement desirable conferencing features, and secondly at draft one and subsequent revisions on draft two. From this chapter onwards the emphasis shifted. The aim of the study from this point onwards was to analyse how what was said in the conference was related to work produced by the student in the follow-up draft. It became clear during this analysis that identifying and tabulating points raised and relationships to follow-up drafts was not an easy process. In this regard it is important to point out how, in accordance with qualitative studies and working within the constructivist paradigm, the relationship may not be observed as merely cause-effect.



This chapter is thus a fifth MCA within the overall stage of analysis in the framework for AR suggested by Burns (2005). It involves the AR team in noting two factors: how the language point was dealt with, and into which of the six categories in table 9g such points were placed. As table 11a in chapter eleven outlines, in order to further focus our study, this table was later adapted and resulted in a sixth MCA.

### **10.1.1 Preparation for analysis**

On personal reflection, feeling that the previous analysis had lacked direction, and in order to provide more focus to this study, I identified and highlighted what my reading of his draft one led me to believe were twenty-three language points Ece had dealt with in her conference with Ekrem. After discussion with Ece over the validity of these points, I then provided her and Seda with a copy of the six categories (9.18) into which, according to their respective judgements, each of the points should be placed. Since a large amount of research time and energy had gone into noting the implementation of them, I also requested that where possible we each continue to note the desirable and undesirable conferencing features in 6.4 that appeared to be used when Ece covered each point.

### **10.2 Analysis of conference two data by Wayne**

My analysis of Ece conferencing with Ekrem firstly involved reading the transcript in order to locate sections where I felt she had or had not dealt with the twenty-three points noted on the first draft. I then read for each point both the annotated draft and Ekrem's follow-up draft, noting how he had or had not

made alterations. As we had agreed, I then placed each point in what I felt was the most appropriate category. As previously mentioned, it should be pointed out that, in relation to the analysis in both this and following chapters, references to ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ were made by the AR team in a technical rather than subjective value-judgement sense. Clearly, without constant reference to the essay and transcript concerned, the discussion following table 10b may be unclear, however the intention here is rather to outline and emphasise the analytical procedure at this point of the study prior to adapting this in later chapters. To assist the reader with points made in this chapter, transcripts and essays are, on request, available in electronic format.

**Table 10a: designated categories of conferencing**

<b>Category 1</b>	<i>Points were noted on the pre-conference draft and dealt with successfully, in that the student was able to utilise them to make suitable improvements in the follow-up draft.</i>
<b>Category 2</b>	<i>Points were noted on the pre-conference draft and dealt with less successfully, in that the student was unable to utilise them to make suitable improvements in the follow-up draft.</i>
<b>Category 3</b>	<i>Points were noted to be dealt with on the pre-conference draft but were not dealt with during the conference.</i>
<b>Category 4</b>	<i>Points were dealt with during the conference that were not noted for discussion on the pre-conference draft, and which led to alterations in the follow-up draft. We noted that this category could be sub-divided into: a: point raised by the teacher during the conference, and b: points raised by the student during the conference.</i>
<b>Category 5</b>	<i>Points that the other teachers saw that had not been listed for treatment</i>
<b>Category 6</b>	<i>Undesirable conferencing techniques and how they affected the follow-up draft.</i>

**Table 10b: Individual categorisation of conference two**

<b>Points for discussion</b>	<b>Category: Wayne</b>	<b>Category: Ece</b>	<b>Category: Seda</b>
1. more suitable title	One	One	Two
2. 'the biggest'	Two	Two	One
3. 'average'	Two	One	One
4. 'doubtly'	One	one	One
5. Removing text	Two	Two	Three
6. deleting 'their cars'	One	One	One
7. 'after'	Three	Three	Three
8. 'if so'	One	One	One
9. 'are'	One	One	One
10. 'use their cars'	Two	One	Two
11. avoiding repetition	One	One	One
12. 'share car'	Three	Three	Two
13. 'the'	One	One	One
14. 'for example'	One	One	Two
15. 'radar'	One	One	Two
16. 'amount of traffic'	Two	Two	Two
17. 'traffic police'	Three	Three	Three
18. 'to'	One	One	One
19. 'unless'	Two	One	Two
20. 'owneself'	Two	Two	Two
21. 'avoidable'	One	One	Two
22. 'on condition that'	One	One	Two
23. without paying attention to'	One	Two	Two

### **10.3 Wayne's analysis: points of interest**

Ece's feedback on point sixteen was ignored by Ekrem in his follow-up draft and thus appears in category two. As a result of post-analysis discussion with Ece, point twenty was later moved into this category from category three and so was point five. Examples of category three originally included point five in which it is unclear what Ece was intending to discuss and point twelve, where she apparently forgot to tell Ekrem of the missing 'their' (share their cars), plus point seventeen, concerning 'police' and point twenty, 'ownself'. Thus, three of the twenty-three points marked on the first draft were not dealt with. Although I noted no examples of category four, for category five I felt Ece had not noted how Ekrem had on eight occasions incorrectly capitalised words, for example in line 18 where he had written 'Drivers' instead of 'drivers'. In all eight cases he did the same in his follow-up draft. Another example occurs where Ece has omitted to mention the missing article at the beginning of line eight, and prior to Government, also in line eight. Ece did not mention that 'measure' should be 'measures' in line thirteen. Thus, although I felt that Ece dealt with twenty of the twenty-three points she had noted, taking the additional three into consideration, according to my analysis Ece had covered twenty of a possible twenty-six points.

Examples of undesirable conferencing (category six) included only point eight, although at times I felt others may have been included that I have placed in category one. Placing points in category six is problematic as it concerns whether or not the purpose of the conference is to send the student away with questions in mind, or after getting them to think during the conference.

Sometimes I felt Ece sent Ekrem away to think and the result was he returned with unsuccessful alterations. At others she provided the correct form and he returned with successful alterations. Details concerning overall categorisation by myself, Ece and Seda appear in table 10c, while a discussion of my own and Ece's findings appears in 10.5.

#### **10.4 Analysis of conference two data by Ece's and points of interest**

After her first analysis Ece had omitted to categorise points eighteen to twenty-three. On reflection I realised I had made several references in this thesis to how Seda and others found working as part of an AR team rather challenging, and have praised Ece's efforts. In fact, Ece's incomplete analysis here reflects how even such a committed team member may find analysis difficult. On my request, Ece later completed her analysis, resulting in her placing sixteen points in category one. Following post-analysis discussion we agreed to move point sixteen to category two. Concerning category two, Ece explained to me that 'fourteen falls into two categories' (one and two) 'as I told him to put the phrase into a sentence, which means he needn't have replaced 'for example' with 'such as'. Also as a result of post-analysis discussion, Ece and I agreed that point two should be placed in this category. Concerning category three, for point seven she had added: 'after / when' – I might not have dealt with it as I already suggested an alternative in the first draft. It wasn't clear, though 'When they're drunk' should have been given." For point twelve she had added: " 'to share cars', I'm not quite sure if it's used. 'Car pooling' would be better." For point seventeen, she commented: 'I failed to say that 'policeman' is the countable form, which in turn requires a change in

point sixteen, not 'amount', but 'number'. Ece had not noted any of the points for categories four or five, but for category six she explained: 'For point 14, I didn't explain what he should do and this caused misunderstanding, however, he was the one to think of the correct answer (turn 48). I was right in expecting the correct answer form in the second draft. I may have thought he knew where to use 'such as' and 'for example She had also written: 'Line 9 – 'not to use' in his second draft he dropped the 'to' which must have been through carelessness

### **10.5 Comparative analysis: Ece and Wayne**

A comparative analysis of Ece's and my own reveals that she believed most of the time the conference had led to 'successful' alterations in the follow-up draft, my own figure for this, category one, was relatively lower. Of the twelve points I felt she had dealt with successfully, Ece agreed with nine. Of the remaining points, I felt six belonged in category two, indicating the conference had led to 'less successful' alterations. I believed there were eight examples of category two, while Ece felt there were three. As explained in 10.3.2, after discussion we agreed her figure should include points 16 and 23. For category three, on three of the four points we agreed. I felt, however, that she had not dealt with point twenty. She felt she had covered point sixteen to a sufficient degree to enable Ekrem to change 'amount' to number'. Our joint analysis on this point revealed how she had in fact clearly dealt with this point, but also clear was the limited success as indicated in Ekrem's follow-up draft. Neither of us had placed this in category two originally, although we agreed it would be more appropriate to be placed there. Concerning point twenty, Ece

showed me later how she had covered this point, which we agreed should be placed in category two. Post analysis discussion between us clarified a few points, especially concerning category three, which we reduced to an agreed three points. Ece had noted no points for category four, although I originally believed point two should appear there. Further post analysis discussion allowed Ece to show me how in turns 8-15 she had attempted to cover this point, although she noted this had resulted in limited success. We thus agreed this should appear in category two, and not, as she had originally felt, category one. Without wishing to put her into a defensive mode, I indicated to Ece the points mentioned above where I believed she might have focused further on Ekrem's work. After considering this she noted several such points but could not explain why she might have ignored them, suggesting only that she had simply overlooked them in her wish to get the job done. Ece added one further point she believed she had overlooked which concerned suggesting Ekrem change 'solution of' to 'solution to'. Thus we agreed that in four cases Ece had overlooked points for the student to work on. As indicated in 10.2.6, category six being problematic, we agreed not to include it in analysis from this point unless we felt it was relevant to other points being made concerning conferencing.

#### **10. 6 Analysis of conference two data by Seda**

Seda was unable to deal with her analysis until after 10.5 had been written. This was due to being given departmental responsibility for a time-consuming technical translation from English to Turkish. She twice failed to meet deadlines she had imposed on herself to carry out this phase of the study. Her

eventual letter agreeing to withdraw from the study refers to such pressure (11.2). I noted how Seda had only categorised twelve of the agreed twenty-three points. Although Seda was not comfortable with being recorded, she was on this occasion able to give me permission to do so as we sat together and I explained once again how I wished her to deal with the remaining points. It is worth pointing out perhaps that researchers should always be in possession of their voice-recorder to take advantage of such opportunities. Seda explained she felt the remaining eleven points should go into each of the categories. Point 10 she was initially unable to categorise, but later placed it in category 2.

After an AR team discussion, we felt data for categories four to six was fairly inconclusive and perhaps less appropriate for the study at this point, although in later chapters I have noted where I felt they were significant, thus table 10c illustrates data for only categories one to three.

**Table 10c: conferencing categories noted**

Category	Wayne	Ece	Seda
One	12/23	15/23	8/23
Two	8/23	5/23	12/23
Three	3/23	3/23	3/23

## **10.7 Reflexive summary for MCA Five**

MCA five concerned the AR team working individually on the second set of conferencing data with analytical tools such as conferencing categories. Such an analysis reflects a complete contrast to that of MCA one, during which I



assisted three teachers with analysing only the particular conference they were involved in. MCA five thus represents an increased degree of collaboration, reflecting perhaps the increased interest the study was providing now that its emphasis had changed. The outcome of this MCA was a realisation that we needed further refinements to our analysis, i.e. action that involved adapting our tools for analysis.

### **10.8 Chapter summary and findings**

This chapter reveals how, perhaps in contrast to the analysis in the previous chapter of the first of our six conferences, the AR team carried out a more focused analysis of data related to the second conference. The chapter illustrates how Ece and I were able to work firstly on independent analyses, then discuss and in several cases reach agreement over our respective findings. It is interesting to note how, following post-analysis collaborative discussion between Ece and myself, our data shows a much greater degree of similarity than that between our own and Seda's data. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, it is also important to note in relation to agreement and otherwise in our respective analyses that opting for category one or two (see 10.2 above) may be related to personal interpretation of the meaning of the words 'successfully', 'unsuccessfully' and 'dealt with'. At this juncture I further noted how, for some points discussed in it, the conference had less relevance as the student had time to think about points identified on the annotated draft before the conference. We agreed to note such instances where possible in our analyses of data relating to conferences three to six. What also became apparent to me at the end of our individual analyses of

conference two data was how the team had not related features from 6.4 with each of the categories from 9.21.

At the end of this phase I believed it might assist with the study if, as a team, we firstly identified points indicated by the teacher for discussion in the conference, then located and agreed on sections of the transcript within which each point was covered. 11.4 explains how Ece and I did this for our analysis of transcript three in the following chapter. It also became clear to me at this point once more how time-consuming and complicated this study was becoming. An unrelated factor was also how being unable to meet as a team and discuss in detail how to proceed was adding to the difficulty, while my having to chase up incomplete analyses was causing tension. These two factors made me, in relation to our analysis, resolve to pursue a tighter focus in the study in order to make the work less time-consuming.

## Chapter Eleven

### Observing and analysing: MCA Six

#### 11.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined how the AR team worked on independent analyses of conference two data, and then collaborated in order to compare findings concerning the relationship between features on the conference transcript and changes made by the writer in the follow-up draft. This chapter continues with further analysis, this time of conference three data, but also with changes to the team (11.2) and more refinement to the means of analysis (11.3). Due to this refinement, it thus involves a sixth MCA within the overall analysis, and illustrates more refinement in the focus of our study.

#### 11.2 Participant withdrawal

Based on my awareness of her increased workload, before continuing with our analysis of conference three data I offered Seda the opportunity to withdraw from the study. My letter to her below outlines this offer.

##### Offer to end participation

July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

Dear Seda,

I would firstly like to thank you very much for your valuable help thus far with our action research study. It has been and still is very much appreciated. As I am entering the final phase of the study I would like to know how you feel about continuing to be part of the study. As you know, we have four transcripts along with related essay drafts still to analyse. If we are to do this as a group, it will be necessary to agree some tight deadlines and stick to them. I know that this might be difficult for you in the light of your other workload commitments, and so wanted to give you the opportunity to withdraw if you would prefer to. In this case, the

remaining team members will work on the transcript analysis. If you can continue to participate in the AR study and meet the deadlines, I will be very grateful for your contribution. But if you do prefer to withdraw, please be assured that this will have no negative effect on our working relationship. Please give the matter some thought and get back to me.

Best wishes, Wayne.

As a result of my letter Seda felt it would be best for her to withdraw. With her permission, her reply appears below.

Dear Wayne,

First of all, thank you for your kind thank-you note and for giving me the opportunity to think once more about whether to continue being a part of the team or not. Going back, you have been so kind to do this several times before and though, as you know, it was too hard, especially last year, I continued to give support to your study as it is my motto to finish what I have started. However, now, given the chance to think again, I have come to a point where, I think, I may be giving both myself (with too much workload) and you (having to wait for me to wrap things up as I usually have difficulty sticking to deadlines) too much trouble. Therefore, Wayne, I am sorry I feel I won't be able to participate in your research in the following stages. Whether you choose to work with the current team or ask somebody to join in, you can work on the data I and my students provided. Good luck in your research and I hope all goes well for you. Best wishes, Seda.

There are three issues in relation to Seda's reply. While Ece and I were grateful that she offered to let us use data she and her students had generated, when planning my letter to her I had at first considered asking her to formally consent to this. It was therefore particularly pleasing that Seda herself made her agreement clear. Secondly, it is worth noting that issues over rights, along with ownership of and access to data generated, should be clarified at the very outset of research projects, and that while care should be

taken when inviting them to engage in a study, it is as important at the end to thank participants for their time and energy devoted throughout. Thirdly, it is interesting to note how Seda in her letter refers to ‘your study’ and ‘your research’ (the latter twice) and perhaps, in positioning herself thus, explains once more how she did not fully perceive herself as a team member.

### **11.3 Focusing the analysis**

Following Seda’s withdrawal from the study, Ece and I, the two remaining members, met to discuss how to proceed. We both noted from our reading of chapter ten how, although we had indicated where we each believed degrees of what we cautiously labelled ‘success’ in our conferencing had occurred, as a team we had not, as we had intended, outlined how any of the features listed in 6.4 had been involved in such matters. In order to provide more focus to the study we thus worked on the terminology involved before agreeing to use table 11a to analyse conference three data. This we believed would enable us to look into relationships between features outlined in 6.4, and categorised in 9.18, in a more systematic manner. By doing so we felt we might be able to observe relationships between the discourse of conferences and what, as a result, writers did in their follow-up draft. In fact, from this point onwards this study was concerned mainly with the latter point.

During the same discussion, and prior to our analysis, Ece expressed doubts over the ability to do this with some of the features in 6.4. On her suggestion we adapted one feature and, as we felt it would have little relevance, removed one other: feature 6.4.4, formerly ‘encouraging self-correction of errors’ we

sub-divided into 'eliciting' and 'teacher-correction', while checking whether teachers engaged in 'analysing follow-up-drafts' was removed as there was no evidence available to check this. Table 11a reveals how Ece and I analysed the conference data.

**Table 11a: analysis table**

Turn / Point	Conferencing feature noted	Category
	Overall evaluation	
	Limiting the number of points to deal with	
	Helpful conference discourse markers	
	Eliciting	
	Teacher correction	
	Providing praise and mitigating comments	
	Providing helpful examples	
	Suitable pronoun choice	
	Negotiation in the mother-tongue	
	Pausing to encourage interaction	
	Questioning to increase interaction	
	Clear instructions for follow-up drafts	

#### **11.4 Establishing conferencing points**

As outlined in 10.1, prior to our analysis of conference two data, I alone had read and located twenty-three points which I felt were discussed by Ece during her conference with Ekrem. Seda and Ece later read and agreed with my findings.

In order to further increase the degree of collaboration, prior to carrying out our separate analyses Ece and I met and read transcript three together in order for us to clarify which and how many of the points Seda (the teacher involved) had covered. Doing so we felt would save us time and further enable us to explore what had taken place in the conference and how this had affected the follow-up draft. Our joint analysis led us to believe Seda had covered the following seventeen:

**Table 11b: points discussed**

turn	Point
1	1. thesis statement
11	2. in addition
16	3. consequently
23	4. enough careful
24	5. most people
28	6. quantity
42	7. on roads
50	8. a missing verb
67	9. the number of
68	10. doing this
84	11. avoid not obeying
96	12. government
98	13. making difficult
120	14. few
124	15. carelessness
130	16. but
136	17. passive voice

Having originally only described what appeared to occur in conference three data, I later decided to tabulate this in order to clarify such matters for the reader. Where possible I have done so, however in some cases I felt it was better to explain in detail in 11.6 for Ece, and in 11.8 for my own analysis. Tables 11c and 11e illustrate our respective analyses. Realisation that such a table had limitations concerning analysis and representation of findings led us to adapt the table for our analysis of data for conferences four to six. The adapted table appears in 11.9 as table 11f.

### 11.5 Ace's analysis of conference three

**Table 11c: tabulated conference three data**

<b>Conferencing feature noted</b>	<b>Turn / point</b>	<b>Details / Examples</b>	<b>Category</b>
<b>Overall evaluation</b>	point 1: thesis  statement  point 11: in addition  point 16: consequently		Successful
<b>Limiting the number of points</b>	No data provided	N/A	N/A
<b>Helpful conference discourse markers</b>	turn 1:       turn 7:	'in the first paragraph'       'one more point in the body paragraph'	



	<p>turn 11:</p> <p>turn 16:</p> <p>turn 22:</p>	<p>‘just the point I want to make is about your order’</p> <p>‘and one more thing’</p> <p>‘that’s about the overall format of the essay’</p>	
<b>Eliciting</b>	points: 5, 6, 7, 9, 10.		all successful
<b>Teacher correction</b>	Points 8, 13 14	See extract 11a	successful
<b>Providing praise and mitigating comments</b>	<p>turn one</p> <p>turn nine</p> <p>turn eleven</p> <p>turn twenty-two</p>	<p>‘I think generally your essay is a good one.. I like your essay’ (turn one),</p> <p>‘very good.. that’s right’</p> <p>‘you have very successfully done that’</p> <p>‘great..thank you.. thanks a lot’</p>	

<b>Providing helpful examples</b>	No data	No data	
<b>Suitable pronoun choice</b>	Turn 7	'us' and 'we'	
<b>Negotiation in the L1</b>	turns 62 and 64: point six turn 94: point eleven turns 100 and 114: point 13	'quantity'  'avoid not obeying'  'making difficult having'	
<b>Pausing to encourage interaction</b>	No data	No data	
<b>Questioning to increase interaction</b>	turn 7  turn 32	'what do we do'  "what else can you say here'	
<b>Clear instructions for follow-up drafts</b>	turn 34: point 11  turn 94	'maybe you can.. think about making this better'  'go away and think about it ok in your second draft I'm sure you'll find it..ok'.	

## 11.6 Comments on Ece's analysis: discourse markers

Ece also noted 'how about this' (turn 24), and 'how about this' in turn 28. Two more examples she noted were in turn 50, 'thank you and here on line eleven' and 'thanks a lot and here in line thirteen' in turn 68. Ece thus noted nine instances of Seda's use of discourse markers in her seventy four turns in the conference. Clearly, the use of this feature was dominant in Seda's conferencing style.

### 11.6.1 Eliciting

Ece noted how eliciting was used by Seda to increase the amount of interaction in the conference and how with the use of such a technique, from the list of seventeen points in table 11b, the following six could be designated as successful conferencing: 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12. Ece noted how teacher correction in three cases had resulted in successful conferencing. How Seda deals with point 8 is illustrated below in extract 11a, and the example of using suitable pronouns is illustrated in extract 11b.

Extract 11a

- |   |
|---|
| <p><b>52 Seda:</b> what does this sign mean from me? (indicating her symbol denoting a missing word)</p> <p>what is this?</p> <p><b>53 Fatih:</b> to erm .....there needs be a verb</p> <p><b>54 Seda:</b> a verb there.that's right..you need something there..what do you think?</p> <p><b>55 Fatih:</b> to erm</p> <p><b>56 Seda:</b> increase</p> |
|---|

### 11.6.2 Suitable pronouns

Extract 11b

7        **Seda:** safer.yes that would be a good one ok that would give us the main idea..of the essay..yes ok great.er. and also one more point I have about the format..er in the body paragraph what do we do in the body paragraph in a problem solution essay?

### 11.6.3 Pausing to encourage interaction

Ece added to her analysis that pausing to encourage interaction (was) ‘not clear on the script’ and ‘even if there was pausing it must have followed the questions asked by the teacher’. I too noted no instances of where this feature was used. This is possibly a reflection on the transcript, or on Seda’s conferencing style. In fact, the absence of pauses may be explained as a limitation of working from transcripts; video recordings would perhaps have helped.

### 11.6.4 Dominant conferencing features

Table 11d summarises Ece’s analysis, although is also noticeable that as some turns contain more than one feature, alterations in the follow-up draft may be a result of a combination of features. Hence it would, as we were working within the constructivist paradigm, be unwise to be too categorical concerning any cause – effect relationship between conferencing features and successful outcomes on follow-up drafts.

**Table 11d: dominant conferencing features**

Features dominant in conference three
Overall evaluation
Teacher correction
Discourse markers
Eliciting

Ece had thus noted where and how the conference had covered all but the following points listed in table 11b in 11.4: 15, 16 and 17. This was the second occasion on which Ece had not completed her analysis, which perhaps reflects the possibility that for those for whose main concern in life is not AR, data analysis may quickly become a chore. As she was heavily involved with teaching on the summer school and later away from IYTE on leave I did not wish to press her on these matters and how they might relate to what we believed was successful or less successful conferencing. Instead, and once again to narrow the focus, I adapted table 11a, which appears in 11.9 as table 11f.

### 11.7 Wayne's analysis of conference three data

**Table 11e: tabulated conference three data**

Conferencing feature noted	Turn / point	Details/ Examples	Category
Overall evaluation	point 1: thesis statement point 11: in addition point 16:		Successful

	consequently		
<b>Limiting the number of points</b>	See comments in 11.8		
<b>Helpful conference discourse markers</b>	turn 22  turn 24  turn 28  turn 42  turn 50  turn 68.	‘for example if you look at line two  ‘how about this’  ‘how about this’  ‘and here on line eleven’  ‘and here in line thirteen’	
<b>Eliciting</b>	turn 52  point 17	‘what does this sign mean from me.. what is this’  Seda eliciting that Fatih should use the passive voice in his conclusion; draft two reveals, he did not do so	Unsuccessful
<b>Teacher correction</b>	See comments in 11.8		
<b>Providing</b>			

<b>praise and mitigating comments</b>	turn one:  turn one:	'I like your essay <u>but</u> ..  'the format is ok er <u>but</u> ...	
<b>Providing helpful examples</b>	No data	No data	
<b>Suitable pronoun choice</b>	turn 7	'us' and 'we'	
<b>Negotiation in the L1</b>	point 6: turns 50 to 68  See comments in 11.8 for further details	Seda suggested a phrase in the mutual L1 which led the student to alter 'increase the quantity of penalties' to 'introduce stricter penalties'	Successful
<b>Pausing to encourage interaction</b>	No data	No data	
<b>Questioning to increase interaction</b>	See comments in 11.8		
<b>Clear instructions for follow-up drafts</b>	See comments in 11.8		

### **11.8 Comments on Wayne's analysis**

Table 11e firstly reflects my agreement with Ece's analysis concerning the first three points. Although Ece provided no data or comments concerning limiting the number of points, a comparison of length in terms of time and turns, along with the number of points dealt with reveals how the previous conference (chapter ten) involving Ece and Alpay lasted 18 minutes 30 seconds, consisted of 151 turns and covered 23 points, while that between Seda and Fatih lasted 15 minutes 40 seconds, consisted of 148 turns and covered 17 points. Conference one, involving myself and Gulen lasted 9 minutes 30 seconds and consisted of 111 turns, at that time we had not counted the number of points covered. It is possible that 23 points might be considered a large number, but of course we should consider the complexity of each point and in how much depth it was discussed. Thus, although Ece had not commented on this, I felt 17 points was a reasonable amount to discuss during a conference lasting 15 minutes and 40 seconds and consisting of 151 turns.

Instead of teacher correction, we may observe an example of student correction for point four; the actual conference had less relevance in the correction here, though, since based on underlining on the annotated draft the student came to the conference with the correct form in mind. This exemplifies the point once again concerning pedagogical practice versus research approaches. On reflection, more thought should have gone into the area of



annotating drafts prior to conferences. It is interesting to note how Seda mitigates her praise, which I have denoted with underlining 'but

For point eight, a missing word, Seda provides the answer herself as a lead-in to discussion on point nine involving a second occasion during which in turns 62-64 she uses the L1 to elicit 'increase the number of' which the student has used in the follow-up draft, an example of category one, successful conferencing. For point nine Seda translates her original question of 'what ...can you increase' into the L1 which elicits from Fatih the correct response and which in turn 63 he immediately and correctly translates into 'amount'. In the follow-up draft he reproduced the sentence based on this point which I noted as category one. For point eleven I noted Seda's fourth use of the L1. Rather than eliciting the L2 of *kurallar ihlal etmek*, (obey the rules) Seda asks Fatih to go away and think about it: ' .. ok. In your second draft I'm sure you'll find it'. Fatih did so on the follow-up draft. We thus have a third example of where the use of the L1 resulted in category one, i.e. successful conferencing. Concerning point thirteen, I noted a fifth example of Seda's use of the L1 between turns 98-120 during which she firstly elicits. This section illustrates negotiation of meaning, although in this case it resulted in what I felt was category two, less successful conferencing, in a sense, since what was arrived at after discussing the point was not replicated correctly in the follow-up draft.

Turns 1-18 involve five examples of questioning, during which Seda covers the first three of the points listed in table 11b in 11.4: turn 3: 'so what can the thesis statement be here'; turn 7: ' what do we do in the body paragraph in a

problem solution essay; turn 11: 'what do you think about that'; turn 14: 'how can you make it better' and in turn 18: what would be more suitable here'. There appears to be a relationship between such open-ended teacher questioning and improvements on follow-up drafts as I placed each of the three points covered in category one.

Concerning point ten, covered by Seda in turns 68-84, although Seda's questioning on Fatih's meaning elicits in turn 69 the correct response – 'government' – he failed to take on board this information when writing the follow-up draft. This I noted as category two: less successful conferencing. Use of the L1, not taken advantage of here, may have assisted with this point, I felt.

Concerning point seven, Seda firstly questions Fatih on his use of 'on roads' before eliciting his realisation that it is unnecessary. Seda questions Fatih when discussing point eight - 'what does this mean' - in order to elicit 'increase' which was the missing verb in his sentence. This I noted as category one. Point twelve also involved teacher questioning to elicit the missing definite article for 'the government' in turn 97. Point fourteen involved teacher questioning concerning Fatih's incorrect use of 'few'. Since Seda had written 'comparison' above this word on the pre-conferencing draft, the role of the conference in Fatih's successful revision has less relevance. Point fifteen involved teacher questioning in turn 128, where Seda asks 'er in the conclusion.. This resulted in what I felt was less successful conferencing

since, instead of acting on what was discussed in the conference. Below I have outlined more details concerning specific conferencing features.

### 11.8.1 Helpful conferencing discourse markers

Concerning the use of discourse markers, I had noted six examples. It is perhaps interesting to note our contrasting interpretations of what constitutes a helpful discourse marker. In extract 11d (below),

Extract 11d

**22 Seda:**yes taking everything into consideration'..yes..great..thank you..thanks a lot..now that's about the overall format of the essay and er there are also some other parts that we need to maybe talk about..some of them are really minor errors..er but I'm sure you can work them out..for example if you have a look at line two

as an instance of a discourse marker, I noted how Seda used: ' ..if you look at line two., while in the same turn Ece had noted instead 'that's about the overall format of the essay and er there are also some other. In spite of this, we agreed that Seda's marking where the discourse was concerned added value to the conference in terms of successful alterations to Fatih's follow-up draft, although it was not possible to quantify such a belief or even relate it in a cause-effect pattern. This further reflects features of working within a constructivist paradigm.

### 11.8.2 Eliciting

My analysis of both our findings led me to note how eliciting and teacher questioning tended to overlap. For example, in turn 14, in extract 11e (below)

Extract 11e

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| <b>13</b> | <b>Fatih:</b> it doesn't er seem good                                  |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Seda:</b> how can you make it better                                |
| <b>15</b> | <b>Fatih:</b> maybe I would have added er finally but most importantly |

Ece had noted turn 14 as an example of eliciting, whereas I believed it was teacher questioning. We may thus note how teacher interpretation of the intention of an utterance in a conference may vary considerably. In contrast, Ece noted in turn five in extract 11f (below) a clear instance of eliciting, one in fact I had not noted in my own analysis.

Extract 11f

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>4</b> | <b>Fatih:</b> I can add..I can add er 'this essay' er 'discusses these precautions' er |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Seda:</b> to  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Fatih:</b> to make it better  |

In extract 11e, as Fatih's follow-up draft illustrates, this exchange led to him adopting the language resulting from it. In 11f, although the resulting language uttered by Fatih, if implemented, would perhaps also have improved the second draft, he opted for the alternative 'In this essay I will try to discuss these precautions'. In connection with this we may thus note two things: firstly, that students may quickly forget what was said in the conference, which supports the idea that summarising conferences at the end may be a useful technique to implement in that it helps students to recall what has been

discussed. Secondly, how, although Ece and I interpreted it differently, eliciting or teacher questioning led in both cases to the student arriving at suitable improvements, which equates with our perception of category one conferencing.

### 11.8.3 Providing praise and mitigating comments

Although Ece located five instances of praise, it is only in turn one we noted that Seda praises prior to adding a mitigating comment. These I have underlined below in extract 11g.

Extract 11g

**1 Seda:**ok Fatih first of all thank you for doing this.. you didn't have to do it..for agreeing to do this.er and I think generally your essay is a good one.. I like your essay but of course there are some parts that we need to talk about..some problems..if we look at the general format..the format is ok er but in the first paragraph here for example  
(indicating the + symbol followed by dotted lines on the student's copy)

### 11.8.4 Negotiation in the L1

As 11.5.7 and 11.6.9 illustrate, Ece and I both noted four instances of where Seda used the L1 to cover four points marked on the essay. We also noted how in each case the use of the L1 was related to what we felt were successful alterations on Fatih's follow-up draft. Extract 11h (below) illustrates how Seda used the L1 to elicit 'strict'.

Extract 11h

**36 Seda:**more natural English?...instead of 'increase the quantity' ....maybe you can say  
*'daha sıkı cezalar'.. 'daha sert cezalar'*

**37 Fatih:**yes strict..strict

**38 Seda:**yes..that's right

In extract 11i Seda again successfully elicits.

Extract 11i

**62 Seda:**what of advertising campaigns can you increase? *nesini artirabiliriz?*

**63 Fatih:***say* amount *mik...*

**64 Seda:***sayısı* that's correct *sayısı artır*

**65 Fatih:**quantity..amount..number

**66 Seda:**that's right ok so if you say//

In the third example of her use of the L1 Seda asks Fatih to reflect.

Extract 11j

**90 Seda:**can you make this positive maybe.. avoid?

**91 Fatih:**avoid...er *uymak?*

**92 Seda:**er but then your meaning will change..just the opposite the opposite of obey

**93 Fatih:**obey (long pause)

**94 Seda:***kurallar ihlal etmek*..how can you say that in English? maybe you can think about it  
..go away and think about it.

In the fourth example, in extract 11k, Fatih is once again able to build on Seda's use of the L1.

Extract 11k

**99 Fatih:**mmm

**100 Seda:**I know what you mean *.zorlaştırmak'*

**101 Fatih:***zorlaştırmak* yes

**102 Seda:**but how do we say it? what is this structure?

**103 Fatih:**yes..I learned it.. you said it in class

**104 Seda:**oh..did I? ok

**105 Fatih:**make it er to make ..to make more difficult

**106 Seda:**but..not more difficult..make difficult is ok but you need another word here..you need a pronoun

### 11.8.5 Questioning to increase interaction

As 11.7.4 illustrates, in contrast to my own analysis, Ece had noted several instances of eliciting' although many of those I felt were cases of teacher-questioning. 11.6.12 explains how there appeared to be a strong relationship between open-ended teacher-questioning and successful alterations on Fatih's follow-up draft. An example of such questioning appears below in extract 11l.

Extract 11l

**3 Seda:**yes you need a clear thesis statement..so what can the thesis statement be here?

**4 Fatih:**I can add.. I can add er.. 'this essay' er 'discusses these precautions' er..

### 11.8.6 Clear instructions for follow-up drafts

Ece and I agreed on one instance we both located in the conference, although the instruction is not completely clear. This is illustrated in extract 11m below.

Extract 11m

**94 Seda:***kurallar ihlal etmek*..how can you say that in English? maybe you can think about it ..go away and think about it..ok in your second draft I'm sure you'll find it..ok will you remember this when you rewrite?

**95 Fatih:**yes.yes I will

**96 Seda:**ok so think about it

## 11.9 Adaptation

Ece and I noted how, although our use of the table in table 11a had focused our analysis of data and made matters clearer, it was still not clear enough. We therefore adapted the table and arrived at table 11f (below) which we believed would further clarify what had taken place during the conference and help identify possible relationships between this and changes made in follow-up drafts. I have provided an example of a single point taken from the above analysis which illustrates how we planned to proceed in our analysis of conference four data. As this means of tabulation in order to analyse appeared to work well, we decided to use it for the remainder of this study. It is thus the final adaptation, and thus marks the outcome of the MCA in this chapter. Chapter twelve, in which conferences four to six are dealt with in a similar manner, may be described as the seventh and final MCA in this study.

**Table 11f: adapted table**

<b>Draft One Point</b>	<b>Turn(s)</b>	<b>Feature(s)</b>	<b>Draft two</b>	<b>Category</b>
6: 'increase the quantity of penalties'	50-68	L1	'introduce stricter penalties'	One

It is worth mentioning that in contrast to our analyses of conference two data, for analysis in this chapter I wrote up Ece's analysis prior to carrying out my own. This proved problematic in that I may, at least subconsciously, have been affected in my analysis by doing so. For the remainder of this study I resolved to analyse prior to reading Ece's account.



### **11.10 Reflexive summary for MCA Six**

The most significant realisation following MCA six was that, in spite of the reduction in team numbers, the remaining two members collaborated in more depth on the conference data. Thus, what we felt might be problematic proved in a sense to ease the study, although it is also possible that having two viewpoints instead of three might have disadvantaged the overall outcome of the analysis on the basis that working within a constructivist paradigm, more views may be better.

MCA six enabled us to begin locating specific conferencing features, a trend which continued for the remainder of the study, yet on reflection might well have been introduced earlier. Of particular significance on reflection is the value to conferencing of using the L1. At the start of the study we believed the conference should only be in English. Along with our change in the belief that conferencing should only be with students we felt were more linguistically capable, the idea that conferencing could be aided by L1 use was a major change.

In terms of critical action research features, team relations showed a great deal of contrast for Ece and myself in terms of the following: gender, age, teaching experience, position within the IYTE staff structure, non-native / native speaker. These factors did not appear to be problematic, however.

### 11.11 Chapter summary and findings

This chapter has explained how the AR team was reduced from three to two members due to Seda's withdrawal. It then outlined how the analysis of the third of six conferences transcripts and related data became more focused. After establishing a list of conferencing points (11.4) the chapter then compared and contrasted Ece's analysis and then my own analysis of transcript three and first and second drafts, attempting to relate how Seda used desirable conferencing features from 6.4 in order to discuss with Fatih the seventeen points listed in 11.4, table 11b, and how these features may have been related to what we had designated as successful conferencing.

**Table 11g: Dominant conferencing features**

Features dominant in conference three
Overall evaluation
L1 negotiation
Discourse markers
Eliciting

A summary of both analyses (tables 11d and 11g) reveals how features such as when teachers mark the discourse of the conference, how they correct, how they question and elicit, and how they use the mutual L1 may each be linked to successful alterations in the follow-up draft.

## **Chapter Twelve**

### **Analysis of conferences four - six: MCA Seven**

#### **12.1 Introduction**

This chapter firstly outlines the AR team's analyses of the fourth of the six conferences in this study, that between myself and Ceylin, a female undergraduate, and illustrates the start of the seventh and final MCA. Ece and I agreed to analyse this, the second of my two conferences, for the practical reason that since, as 9.3.2 shows, with 83 turns and lasting eight minutes, it was the shortest of the three remaining and we felt it would provide us with more time later to deal with the two remaining conferences which were relatively much longer. We also agreed at this point that following this analysis we would analyse Ece's second conference, with Alpay, and then conclude the analysis stage of Burns (2005) by looking at Seda's second conference, with Sevda. These appear in parts two (12.8) and three (12.13) of this chapter. Also explained in this chapter in 12.4, and previously mentioned in 11.8, is an example of a conflict between research and pedagogic goals which constituted a problem for research, if not so much for pedagogy. As the previous chapter explained, in order to make the analysis of the remaining three conferencing transcripts and related essay drafts less time-consuming, and in order to ensure a more focused analysis, Ece and I worked from the table previously illustrated in table 11f and shown again below.

## Part One: conference four

Table 11f

Draft One Point	Turn(s)	Feature(s)	Draft two	Category

### 12.2 Preliminary analysis

Ece and I met in order to read together, discuss and agree on the eventual twenty-two points we were able to identify that I had covered during my conference with Ceylin. It is interesting to note how, although I had located seventeen points prior to this conference, during our meeting Ece and I located a further five, two of which we later felt overlapped, resulting in twenty. In order to complete column two in table 11f we then worked on locating within which turns each of these points had been covered. Following this we noted any alterations made to each point by Ceylin on her follow-up draft.

A combination of the collaborative meeting, the resulting discussion and agreement on such matters and our tabulation of findings, prior to carrying out our respective analyses of transcript four and related essays drafts, saved us both a large amount of research time. This was especially appreciated by Ece who, unlike myself, was at the time also involved in the IYTE summer school. In order to complete our separate analyses it remained for us to complete columns headed 'Feature(s)' and 'Category' To do so we agreed to use the refined list of features illustrated in table 11a which appears in the previous chapter in 11.3. Agreement between Ece and myself on columns one, two and four was reached prior to the analysis. By working with more refined,

agreed categories, this particular analysis resulted in a more concise and generally agreed account than those outlined for all previous MCAs.

Collaboration and agreement outlined above marked a key juncture, since at this point in the study Ece and I first considered moving away from working independently and towards collaboratively producing a single analysis of data relating to conferences five and six. This point is further discussed in 12.5, while parts two and three of the current chapter outline how the outcome of working on a single analysis enabled us to devote more research time towards deeper analysis of our data. Table 12a illustrates an agreed account of the analysis of conference four by Ece and myself in relation to columns three and five.

**Table 12a: analysis of conference four**

<b>One</b> <b>Draft One Point</b>	<b>Two</b> <b>Turn(s)</b>	<b>Three</b> <b>Feature(s)</b>	<b>Four</b> <b>Draft two</b>	<b>Five</b> <b>Category</b>
1 Beautiful	3 – 5	Eliciting / self-correction	beautiful	One
2 ..a lot of destinations which are worth visiting	5 – 11	Teacher-correction	..a lot of destinations worth visiting	One
3 Destinations	11 – 12	Not discussed	No change	Four
4 despite of	13 – 15	Instruction to revise	In spite of	One
5 People on the roads were crowded	15 – 19	Instruction to revise	The number of people on roads increased	One
6 ..so that	19 – 23	Instruction to revise	so	One
7 Big	23 – 25	Eliciting / self-correction	major	One
8 deal the problem	25 – 27	Eliciting / self-correction	Deal with the problem	One
9 responsible people	28 – 31	Instruction to revise	..the authoritarian people	Two
10 ..give stricter	31 – 37	Instruction to revise	..have stricter penalties	One

penalties				
11 Make people..licence more difficult	37 – 41	Eliciting / instruction to revise	Taking a driving licence must become harder	One
12 Missing verb	41-55	Self-correction	Make drivers <u>drive</u> more carefully	One
13 Incorrect adverb form	45 – 51	Eliciting / instruction to revise	Make drivers drive <u>more</u> <u>carefully</u>	One
14 Solving problem	51 – 53	Teacher-correction	Solving this problem	One
15 Missing article	Not discussed	N /a	N /a	Three
16 Public transporters	57 – 58	Eliciting	Public transportation	Two
17 .. it would be less traffic jams	53 – 57	Eliciting / instruction to revise	..it would happen less traffic jams	Two
18 ..responsible for should	59 – 63	Teacher-correction	..responsible for this topic	Two
19 If people learn	63 – 65	Eliciting	If people learnt	One
20 As a consequence	67 – 73	Teacher-correction / instruction to revise	All things considered	One
21 ..doing this	73 – 79	Eliciting	..introducing this solution	One
22 ..would be orderly to live..	79 – 83	Eliciting	.. would be orderly to live in.	One

### 12.3 Post-analysis discussion

Four issues arose during our meeting to compare our respective analyses of conference four. Two of these concerned our current analysis; one was related to an issue of research in general, while the final point was related to teacher-development. Firstly, we both noted how suitable revisions, and thus what we would have previously denoted as ‘successful conferencing’ in relation to the several points in table 12.1 above, was probably more related to the fact that Ceylin had been able to consider these issues prior to the conference. Secondly, we noted how points twelve and thirteen appeared to

overlap and how, with the refinement of this table, it was easier to identify categories other than one and two. For points nine and fifteen we agreed these could be identified respectively as ‘less successful conferencing’ and ‘a point not discussed’. A third point arising from our discussion related to Ece’s confusion over a part of the transcript; in extract 12.1 she could not follow which error was under discussion.

Extract 12.1

<b>56 Ceylin:</b>	problem.. .what is the problem.. ?
<b>57 Wayne:</b>	aah you don't .. you don't need this word... 'using public transport' there's something wrong with the word form

The reason for her confusion, Ece explained, was that in turn 56 Ceylin asks a question but I provide an unrelated answer, one in which I say “this word”, referring to aspects not currently being discussed. After listening to the recording together several times Ece and I agreed that the question Ceylin asked appeared incomplete on the transcript, as her comments were followed by two dots. I explained to Ece how, instead of indicating a trailing away of speech, each dot represented a one-second pause. This was a case of an AR team member simply misinterpreting a transcript and indicates how, prior to analysis, it may be necessary to remind team members of the meaning of such features. However, on later reading the above account, Ece explained how it was, in fact, incorrect as there was certainly a line missing from the transcript, and that she was not as confused as I had described. On further listening we both agreed that the transcript should have read as follows, with the utterance in bold added to the original transcript

#### Extract 12.2

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>56 Ceylin:</b> | problem.. .what is the problem.. ? <b>with public transporters</b>  |
| <b>57 Wayne:</b>  | aah you don't .. you don't need this word...'using public transport' there's something wrong with the word form |

In the extract above I move from 'you don't need this word' referring to the previous point, onto the point Ceylin has in mind. It illustrates how problematic working from transcripts may be, and it is perhaps useful to remind ourselves how, due to constraints of time, they may be incomplete attempts to capture a speech event. This point is further discussed in the final chapter concerning the findings of this study.

The above discussion illustrates Ece's very close reading of the transcript and her concern for specific matters to be discussed. This includes her conclusion that she usually provided the student with the correct word or the correct form, or, in her own words, 'I revised the problematic sentence myself or with the student...I believe it is not a good conferencing technique; instead I'd better leave that job to the student This comment is expanded upon in parts two and three of this chapter during which Ece and I looked more closely at conferencing styles.

### 12.4 Reflections

First noted in 11.8 and again in 12.1 is a problematic issue about this particular conference, and on reflection those others this study has looked at previously: prior to the conference the student involved was provided with a copy of the essay to work from, often with points noted for discussion. In the



case of this conference, these points were highlighted with an orange marker-pen. It is thus often not easy to detect the degree to which the conference enabled, in a cause-effect manner, successful or unsuccessful second-draft revisions since the student may or may not have worked on such issues prior to the conference. My comment at the bottom of Ceylin's first draft illustrates this point. Also on reflection, it may have assisted the study if, instead of providing a pre-conference draft with coded error corrections and occasional teacher comments, the conference concerned only the original essay for the student to make relevant annotations based on the discussion during the conference. An alternative to this might have been to merely provide the student with a copy of the annotated essay immediately before or at the beginning of the conference.

### **12.5 Further analysis: locating dominating features**

From a close look at the data it is noticeable that in five cases, for points four to six and nine and ten, I gave an instruction for Ceylin to revise. In each case this appeared to result in what we had termed, although in its technical rather than value-judgement use, 'successful' conferencing, i.e. Ceylin had been able to work on the error and improve it. For a further four points eleven, thirteen, seventeen and twenty we believed the most noticeable feature involved and which resulted in 'success' was also possibly an instruction to revise.

A second feature appearing to dominate my conferencing style was that of eliciting. In four cases, for points sixteen, twenty-one and twenty-two, Ece and

I agreed it was the dominant feature, mostly resulting in ‘successful’ alterations (apart from 16). As table 12a illustrates, for a further six points eliciting was involved although not dominant, and in all cases apart from point seventeen was related to ‘success

The location of such dominant features used in a conference was the second instance of our forming a belief that certain features were perhaps related, although not in any direct cause-effect manner, to successful alterations in follow-up drafts. Encouraged by our further insight, we continued to try to locate such dominant features in the data relating to the two remaining conferences. Table 12b illustrates features that appear to dominate conferences three and four and that also appear to relate to successful alterations on follow-up drafts.

**Table 12b Dominant / successful conferencing features**

<b>Features dominant in conference three</b>	<b>Features dominant in conference four</b>
Overall evaluation	Instruction to revise
L1 negotiation	Eliciting
Discourse markers	
Eliciting	

## **12.6 Conclusions**

One of the interesting things about our study up to this point was how, due to close collaboration, a common frame of reference had developed between Ece and myself. For both Stage One and Stage Two conferencing, involving different AR teams, one of the purposes of working separately to begin with

was to include as wide a range of perspectives as possible regarding what to look at. By now we had reached a point where we were not looking for 'new' categories any more. It appeared we had got to the point where we used the system we had developed in very similar ways, so it would be time-consuming to pursue the study by carrying out work individually. In view of this joint belief, Ece and I agreed to meet to analyse together what had taken place during the remaining two conference as they appeared in transcripts five and six, and how discussion therein was related to alterations in the follow-up draft.

## **12.7 Part One: summary**

Part one of this chapter has outlined the beginning of a seventh MCA, and further illustrates how the analysis phase within Burns (2005) consists of shorter cycles that are related in that the knowledge gained from one MCA feeds into the next. The part reveals how, from the MCA represented in the analysis of conference four data, we noted how two distinct discourse features tended to dominate, both of which we felt were possibly linked to successful revisions in the follow-up draft.

## **Part two: Conference five**

### **12.8 Introduction**

This chapter continues working with Burns (2005) by outlining the joint analysis of the fifth of six conferencing transcripts and essay drafts in this study. The AR team by this time still consisted of Ece and myself. At a research meeting we had agreed to look next at a conference between Ece and Alpay, and following this we intended to end the overall analysis phase of

Burns (2005) by looking at the sixth conference, that between Seda and Sevda. This and the following part thus work with the model of analysis now finalised in part one of this chapter and illustrated in table 12a in order to continue the focus on locating dominant conferencing discourse features that we felt were related to successful outcomes on students' follow-up drafts.

### **12.8.1 Preliminary analysis**

As we were by this time carrying out a joint single analysis, and as a result with more time available and unlike our dealings with the four previous analyses, Ece and I firstly arranged to meet and read together draft one of Alpay's essay. At the same time as doing so we listened to the recording of her conferencing with him and followed the resulting transcript. Although we noted from this that, once more, occasional words were missing in the transcript, we agreed we would not – in line with previous readings of transcripts in this study – insert such missing items unless it affected the outcome of the analysis. Instead, we further noted how repeated listening to recordings and reading the transcripts of recordings - the latter being of course our attempts to capture the speech event - tends to result in finer detailed accounts. Ece and I later also agreed that, ideally, the AR teams for both Stages One and Two of this study may have produced more efficient analyses by doing as she and I did, listening to the recording while reading the transcripts, and at the same time referring to drafts one and two. This enabled us both to stop the digital recording and return to earlier sections in order to detect finer nuances such as stress on key words when eliciting, questioning or correcting. On reflection, we agreed that perhaps a more finely-

tuned transcript would have assisted the study as a whole, but this has to be balanced against the AR team's time and energy consumed in order to produce such a transcript.

### **12.8.2 Follow-up analysis**

Carrying out the preliminary analysis in 12.8.1 gave us an insight into what Ece had focused on in her conference prior to our follow-up meeting. In this second meeting we listened again to the recording, followed it in the transcript once more, and again referred to both drafts one and two. Stopping the digital recording when necessary, we completed table 12c firstly concerning the specific point covered, and then the turns within which each point was discussed. The latter enabled us to focus on specific turns in order to locate discourse features involved. Having agreed on these matters we later met a third time and by doing the same as we had done in our previous meeting we this time also noted how each point had been dealt with by Alpay in his follow-up draft. At the same time we noted which features from the current list were involved, and the relationship between these and what we jointly believed were successful revisions based upon the conference. In other words, we believed that by locating dominant features that were involved in what we judged to be 'successful' conferencing, we would be able to further identify the most valuable of such features among the discourse moves. This latter point is further discussed in 12.10, which looks more closely at Ece's conferencing style.

**Table 12c: analysis of conference five**

<b>Draft One Point</b>	<b>Turn(s)</b>	<b>Feature(s)</b>	<b>Draft two</b>	<b>Category</b>
<p>1</p> <p>Unsuitable title</p> <p><i>How can we make our roads safer?</i></p>	1 – 11	<p>Helpful</p> <p>examples: 'safer roads' – no more accidents</p>	<i>Troubles in traffic</i>	One
<p>2</p> <p>Missing thesis statement</p>	11 – 23	<p>Discourse marker / eliciting, especially turn 15</p> <p>'don't you think this is a prediction..</p>	<i>Changes made; no noticeable improvement.</i>	Two
<p>3</p> <p>Prediction in the wrong place</p>	15-23	<p>Teacher-questioning e.g. turn 17:'where do you think we should include.. the predictions about the future..</p>	Alpay removed the sentence concerned	One
<p>4</p> <p><i>..the deaths..</i></p>	24 – 27	<p>Teacher-correction e.g., turn 25:</p>	<i>..the number of deaths..</i>	One

5 <i>..continue <u>by</u> increasing.</i>	25 – 33	Teacher- correction	<i>..continue increasing.</i>	One
6 <i>There're...</i>	33 – 37	Eliciting / teacher- questioning / teacher- correction	<i>There are..</i>	One
7 <i>..the traffic</i>	37 – 39	Eliciting /turn 37	<i>..traffic</i>	One
8 <i>One of useful solutions</i>	39 – 41	Eliciting	<i>One of the useful solutions</i>	One
9 <i>..the streaming of traffic..</i>	41 – 51	Eliciting / teacher- correction	<i>..the flow of traffic..</i>	One
10 <i>..drivers could drive their cars easily.</i>	51 – 53	Teacher- correction /turn 53 “just put ‘drive easily”	<i>..drivers could drive easily.</i>	One

11 <i>There are things to do for</i>	53 - 66	Eliciting / turn 59 How can you	<i>There are things that government</i>	One
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<i>government.</i>		complete this sentence'	<i>can do.</i>	
12 <i>..reliever solution..</i>	67 - 73	Teacher- correction	<i>..relieving solution..</i>	One
13 <i>..efficient (intervention)</i>	74 - 82	Eliciting	Point removed from draft two	Five
14 <i>(..efficient) intervention</i>	83 - 99	Instruction to revise	Point removed from draft two	Two
15 <i>Before all <u>of</u> these</i>	99 - 101	Teacher- correction	<i>Before all these</i>	One
16 <i>..traffic..</i>	101 – 115	(negotiation of meaning)	No change	One / Two
17 Combining sentences	115 - 120	Teacher- correction	Not only .. educated.	One
18 <i>interventions</i>	121 - 135	Eliciting / questioning / teacher correction	<i>precautions</i>	One
19 <i>..face worse</i>	135 - 147	eliciting	No change	N/A



20				
Suggestion to add one more solution	149	Instruction to revise	No change	N/A

### 12.8.3 Post-analysis discussion

Following our collaborative work on completing table 12c, Ece and I met once more to discuss our data. Of the twenty points covered during this conference we agreed that fourteen had resulted in what we judged to be ‘success’ in terms of suitable revisions made by the student in his follow-up draft. In two cases we judged the alterations to be relatively less ‘successful,’ while for one we were undecided and for another we noted a category five, the latter for where point thirteen was discussed but had not prior to the conference been previously noted by Ece for discussion.

### 12.8.4 Conferencing issues

In table 12c it is noticeable how, when covering points one to five, Ece deals with global matters of organisation within Alpay’s essay. From point six until the end she deals with more local matters such as articles and prepositions. It is also worth noting how Ece felt when distracted by Alpay who, when Ece was discussing point two, responded by referring to another issue. For point three, Ece and I agreed that although Alpay had, instead of working on the point being discussed, removed it, the outcome was still suitable language use and thus we felt this could be regarded as a case of category one, i.e. ‘successful’ conferencing. This is also another example of an avoidance strategy, first noted in this study in 6.3.3.5.1 as ‘avoidance by omission

### **12.8.5 Conferences and motivation**

Ece and I noted how improved Alpay's follow-up draft in fact was, on the whole, especially in parts containing additions that were unrelated to points discussed in the actual conference. For example, he had rewritten his opening sentence: 'There're so many dangers in the traffic' as: 'There are so many problems in traffic which are waiting to be solved Ignoring the possibility of outside help, we felt the conference had perhaps motivated Alpay to produce his best, possibly to impress Ece, his teacher, who had by taking time to conference with him, shown careful personal consideration for his work in his draft one.

### **12.8.6 Conferencing problems**

We noted how the most suitable alterations made by Alpay in his follow-up draft tended to relate to local concerns, such as articles, prepositions, and lexis. This is perhaps to be expected, but when more complex matters were discussed his alterations in the follow-up draft we felt tended to be less successful, and in some cases sentences were simply removed. An example of this may be seen where, dealing with the related points 14 and 15, the outcome was that Alpay had removed this section from his essay. Ece and I suggested this was perhaps due to confusion caused by Ece's explanation between turns 89 – 95, and that in future discussion on such lengthier matters might be more practical in the mutual L1.

## **12.9 Teacher development**

Ece and I noted two strands of development in relation to our joint analysis of conference five data: the first concerns our overall professional development, while the second is more specific to Ece's language development. Although we were only able to articulate the former at this point, such professional development had been an ongoing feature throughout this study.

### **12.9.1 Professional development**

The degree of collaboration throughout the three research meetings described above involved, which consisted of listening while reading transcripts, then identifying and relating language points in both drafts one and two to previously noted features and categories, led us both to agree that analysing such data is time-consuming and often incomplete. At the same time, however, we agreed it was professionally rewarding in that the space we created in our working schedule to discuss the data enabled us to provide insights into what happened in terms of teacher-student discourse, plus it encouraged us to discuss what we would perhaps do in future conferencing in order to clarify some of the more complex points for the student writer.

### **12.9.2 Language development**

Our joint analysis resulted in language development for Ece in relation to four items. Concerning point sixteen in table 12b, Ece noted how she had, even when discussing this point with Alpay during the conference, come to realise that his use of the word 'traffic' in draft one was in fact appropriate. On further analysing this point during our research meeting she once again noted its

appropriacy. The outcome was our agreement that ‘trafik’ in Turkish appears to function on two semantic levels, one denoting cars moving, the other concerning a dangerous activity. Other examples of language development we noted included how during our discussion of point six in table 12b we were able to discuss how ‘there’re’ is a spoken but not written feature of English. Concerning point nineteen, Ece realised that in writing ‘..face worse. Alpay was in fact using the correct collocation and that the alternatives she was offering him were equally suitable. With regard to the latter issue, although there was no change in his follow-up draft, this was noted as ‘successful conferencing. Ece also realised how Alpay, when writing in line four in his draft one ‘..will continue by increasing,’ had experienced problems with L1 interference from the Turkish ‘*artarak devam ediyor*,’ in which the ‘*arak*’ structure translates as ‘by’ and in some cases, although not this one, may be grammatically correct in English. In her previous conference with Ekrem (chapter ten) Ece had learned that ‘radar’ was used both in Turkish and English. She had previously believed it was only a Turkish word. These were all language points she would, she explained, add to her knowledge of English, and added that they would be suitable starting point should she decide to write an article for a journal, or perhaps a booklet for students on the subject. The issue of development is discussed in more detail in 13.1.1b.

#### **12.10 Further analysis: locating dominant features**

On revisiting the recording of her conference with Alpay, Ece recalled how nervous she had felt and how she had also sensed Alpay’s nervousness. Ece pointed out how in this, her first of two conferences, she felt, as a new

member of the AR team for Stage Two conferencing, she would be expected to cover all points arising in the essay as fully as possible, and how in attempting to do so may have eventually resulted in what she felt was her over-use of teacher-correction. This illustrates the threat to face when teachers are being recorded for research purposes. We both noted, however, that as much as possible she initially attempted to elicit answers from Alpay, then moved onto ask him some probing questions. If these two features did not appear to work, we noted how, and perhaps due to her nervousness, she then tended to provide answers, i.e. use our listed feature of 'teacher-correction' (6.4). Ece added that as she felt Alpay was not prepared for this conference, i.e. had not considered the points she had made on the copy of the pre-conference draft that she had given him, she felt obliged to provide the correct answers. The latter point raises two issues, however: should teachers refuse to continue conferences with students who have clearly turned up with no preparation, and, in contrast, how much time before the conference should students be provided with the draft from which the conference will work? Ece's feeling of perhaps being under pressure due to the first of these issues is further discussed in 12.16.

#### **12.10.1 Conferencing style**

Ece's conferencing style tended to consist of firstly eliciting followed by questioning and then, if necessary, correcting (EQC). A closer look at table 12b and the dominant discourse features involved in covering the points in this conference reveals how she used eliciting on nine occasions, teacher questioning on two occasions, and teacher correction on eight occasions.

Extract 12.3 below, concerning point eighteen in table 12b above, illustrates how Ece adopts such an ‘EQC’ move – eliciting, questioning and then correcting. How this move contrasts with that of Seda’s is discussed in 12.16.

#### Extract 12.3

<b>121 Ece:</b>	ok when it comes to your conclusion (reading line 15) ‘All.. accidents’
<b>122 Alpay:</b>	it includes//
<b>123 Ece:</b>	I guess you again misused it..there are many interventions
<b>124 Alpay:</b>	I guess so
<b>125 Ece:</b>	do you understand
<b>126 Alpay:</b>	intervention also includes the prevent meaning
<b>127 Ece:</b>	or..do you know this.. to take blank .. can you fill this blank?.to take blank ..there is something we do this.. what do.. to take..blank against something.. you know this ..starting with m
<b>128 Alpay:</b>	(5-second pause) mm I couldn’t find
<b>129 Ece:</b>	measure.. to take measures against.. precautions? precautions?
<b>130 Alpay:</b>	I..I don’t know that
<b>131 Ece:</b>	you don’t know..ok (writing the word ‘precautions’ at the end of the essay).. to prevent something happening we take measures..or we take precautions..do you understand the meaning of it?
<b>132 Alpay:</b>	I understand//
<b>133 Ece:</b>	//ok er so instead of this ...ok you can change this sentence ..using all of them.. so we should take measures again or take precautions
<b>134 Alpay:</b>	I will look them up again
<b>135 Ece:</b>	yes..see them in the sentences.

### 12.11 Conclusions

We concluded that eliciting, questioning and correcting tended to lead to what we both judged to be ‘successful’ outcomes in Alpay’s follow-up draft. Based

upon our analysis of conference five data they would be features to recommend to teachers either currently involved in conferencing or planning to implement such a feedback method in their teaching. In line with this, we agreed that we would also recommend the use of these in the order of eliciting followed by questioning, and then, but only where necessary, correcting. Concerning her EQC move, Ece reiterated her point on how in future she would continue with the E and Q, but focus less on C and more on guiding the student towards self-correction. The latter point is of course further evidence of teacher-development in relation to conferencing style.

**Table 12d: Dominant / successful conferencing features**

<b>Features dominant in conference three</b>	<b>Features dominant in conference four</b>	<b>Features dominant in conference five</b>
Overall evaluation	Instruction to revise	Eliciting
L1 negotiation	Eliciting	Questioning
Discourse markers		Teacher correction
Eliciting		

## **12.12 Part two summary**

Part two continued the analysis by looking at the fifth transcript of conferences and related essay drafts and was a continuation of the final MCA. By tabulating data resulting from our joint analysis, Ece and I were not only able – as was the case in part one - to locate and compare the appearance of dominant features of conferencing resulting in successful alterations, we were also able to note a style of conferencing consisting of an established

discourse move. Part two also outlined how discussion arising from the analysis led to professional and language development.

### **Part three: Conference six**

#### **12.13 Introduction**

The sixth and final analysis of a conferencing transcript and related essay drafts concerned Seda conferencing with Sevda. Following Seda's departure from this study, this was the fourth consecutive analysis that Ece and I had carried out as an AR team of two, and the second occasion on which we had worked together to produce a single joint account. At the time we worked on this transcript the new academic semester had just begun, with both Ece and myself, due to staff shortages, having to teach not only extra lessons but also more crowded classes than normal. It was pleasing to note Ece's continued enthusiasm for the study, especially considering that she was again not involved with teaching writing.

We noted how our analysis became successively less time-consuming and also resulted in a comparatively shorter written account, an indication perhaps of development of the AR team as researchers. At the same time it also enabled us to move deeper into our data in order, as with the analysis of Ece's conference with Alpay, to locate dominant conferencing discourse features used by Seda, and possible conferencing patterns. This final analysis now provided us with six MCAs to look at more globally, which we felt would, where possible, during the time remaining in this study enable us to comment further on the relationship between MCAs and thus on perhaps previously



unexplored territory within the Burns (2005) framework, that of analyses within the analysis phase. This appears in 13.2.1a – 13.2.2.7a

## 12.14 Preliminary analysis

In order to begin our analysis Ece and I repeated steps outlined in the parts one and two of this chapter. The outcome of our joint analysis is illustrated in table 12e.

**Table 12e: collaborative analysis of conference six**

Draft One Point	Turn(s)	Feature(s)	Draft two	Category
1  No title	5 – 10	Eliciting:	How can roads be made safer?	One
2  Unsuitable thesis statement: 'However, how?'	11 – 31	Questioning Eliciting	Extended the original thesis statement plus added one more sentence	One / <u>two</u>
3  Issues concerning rank order Another – line14	31 – 51	Elicit	Inserted: 'Finally, but most importantly	One
4  Is / are	51 – 61	Elicit		One / Two

5				
Missing preposition	61 – 67	Elicit	Correct preposition inserted	One
6				
Incorrect verb	67 – 75	Eliciting plus use of L1.	Provided the correct verb – 'speeding'	One
7				
Wrong verb form: 'the most effected'	76 - 91	Eliciting plus use of L1	Produced the correct form	One
8				
Missing preposition	91 – 95	Eliciting	Inserted the correct preposition	One/ two: she wrote 'By this way'
9				
Wrong word: '...the roads being heavy	96 – 105	Eliciting plus use of L1.	Provided the correct word: 'crowded'.	One
10				
Two issues of capitalisation	105 – 115	Questioning	Both problems were corrected.	One

11		Intonation suggests teacher correction	Sevda removed the sentence from her draft two.	One
Unnecessary sentence	115 – 133			
12		Questioning Eliciting Correction	Sevda did not deal with this point	Two
Repetition of 'another problem	133 – 140			
13		Questioning Questioning Eliciting Questioning	Sevda improved the style of lines 14 – 19.	One
Issues of sentence organisation	142 – 161			
14		Questioning Eliciting Instruction to revise	Improved the conditional	One
Issue of conditionals	161 – 166			
15		Discourse marker	Inserted 'Everybody'	One, but did not use the word suggested in the conf
'All people.	166 – 168			
16		Eliciting Instruction to revise	Inserted the correct word: sensitive.	One
Wrong word: sensible	168 – 174			

17			Inserted the correct article	One
Missing article	174 – 176	Eliciting		

### 12.15 Post-analysis discussion

After completing table 12e Ece and I identified features we felt that dominated Seda's conference and any possible relationship in terms of how these features appeared to correspond to successful outcomes in the follow-up draft. In relation to this, Ece mentioned during our discussion how she had, like myself on previous occasions, noted how the categories by which we judged the success or otherwise of the conference were perhaps to a degree subjective, which is perhaps further evidence of teacher development in terms of refinement of thought. Table 12f illustrates once again how features of conferencing appeared to dominate this sixth conference and how they compare with conferences three to five.

**Table 12f: Dominant / successful conferencing features**

Features dominant in conference three	Features dominant in conference four	Features dominant in conference five	Features dominant in conference six
Overall evaluation	Instruction to revise	Eliciting	Questioning
L1 negotiation	Eliciting	Questioning	Eliciting
Discourse markers		Teacher correction	Teacher correction
Eliciting			

Following our noticing it in part two of this chapter, we also sought to locate a distinct conferencing style by Seda. Following the tendency for MCAs to lengthen as our study proceeded. A logical and useful extension to this

seventh MCA we felt would be by comparing Seda's conferencing style with that of Ece's, in terms of her use of discourse features and the order in which they were used.

### 12.16 Conferencing style comparison

We quickly noted how, like Ece, Seda tends to question and elicit for points being discussed. A key difference, though, is her order of using these features. Extract 12.4 below illustrates how, for example when dealing with point one in table 12.1, Seda firstly probes Sevda, then elicits.

Extract 12.4

- 11 Seda:** if we have a look at the overall essay in terms of format..this is..what kind of essay was this?
- 12 Sevda:**problem solution//
- 13 Seda:**//problem solution er ok and what tells us that this is a problem solution essay?
- 14 Sevda:** erm
- 15 Seda:**from which part of the essay do we understand it?
- 16 Sevda:**how can we make the roads safer?
- 17 Seda:**safer..that's our topic
- 18 Sevda:**yes but..I have some mistakes in this essay  
*(Thus far Seda has asked three probing questions; below she moves to eliciting)*
- 19 Seda:**for example in the first paragraph something is missing
- 20 Sevda:** thesis statement I need a thesis statement
- 21 Seda:**a clear thesis statement.. yes this sounds very good 'however' how (reading last line in paragraph one) it sounds very good but you need a thesis statement this sounds a bit informal right?
- 22 Sevda:** yes
- 23 Seda:** if you add a clear thesis statement it would be great

**24 Sevda:** yeah I agree with you

*(Between turns 19 – 24 above Seda elicits three times. She then moves over to helping with a suitable response).*

**25 Seda:** can you give an example?

**26 Sevda:** I can say that this essay will discuss the problem and solutions of making roads safer

**27 Seda:** ok the solution of

**28 Sevda:** the solution of making roads safer

**29 Seda:** //safer ok or the solution to the problem of?//

**30 Sevda:** //making roads safer

**31 Seda:** or dangerous roads maybe.. because the problem is dangerous roads mm ok so when you rewrite it you'll write it ok

We noted how in contrast to the above, Ece, as 12.10 illustrates, tended to begin with eliciting, but on realising she was meeting with resistance from Alpay (who, at least in Ece's mind, had not prepared adequately for the conference) opted to question him. We also noted that whereas Seda, in extract 12.4, following her move from questioning to eliciting, assists with resolving the issue, Ece on several occasions tended to provide the whole answer, i.e. adopt a teacher-correct style. We felt there were perhaps several reasons for this: whereas Ece had only very recently begun as a team member of this study and was being recorded for the first time, Seda had been involved during both Stage One and Two conferencing. We need also to recall how Seda had previous experience of firstly being recorded whilst conferencing, and secondly having spent more time as a teacher of writing at IYTE. Unlike Ece, Seda had read transcripts, listened to herself and assessed her style during Stage One conferencing.

## 12.17 Conclusions

With regard to the above comparisons, we should also add that both Seda and Ece, like myself, were provided with the data created during and after Stage One conferences and the subsequent analysis. Therefore, assuming that during a conference questioning may precede or follow eliciting, and that assisting with the answer is inadvisable, it is possible that Seda, who we should of course point out had been teaching writing for several years by this time, had perhaps interpreted her experience from Stage One conferencing, and thus her understanding of how she might improve her conferencing style, in a matter differently to that of Ece. It is important to point out how such conclusions, however, relate strongly to the concept of constructivism in that no direct cause-effect relationship may be clearly drawn from observations made there. If we look at extracts 12.3 and 12.4, we see both Ece and Seda respectively engaging in contrasting conferencing styles and who, perhaps for various reasons, seem intent on providing help, i.e. opting for teacher-correction as the ultimate solution. Table 12f illustrates, moving from left to right, the use by Ece and Seda of discourse features that formed a personal conferencing move.

**Table 12g: Conferencing styles**

<b>Ece</b>	Eliciting	Questioning	Correction
<b>Seda</b>	Questioning	Eliciting	Correction

## 12.18 Final reflections

Ece and I reflected at this point, noting how during Stages One and Two conferencing the AR teams had enabled this study to report on how we had implemented the Burns (2005) framework. We noted how the final three

stages of Burns (2005), reporting → writing → presenting, may well do so, but would not necessarily need to appear at the end of a study. Instead we noted how they tended to appear as ongoing phases. To clarify this point: the tenth phase involved what Burns (2005) identifies as 'Reporting', which she identifies as 'verbalising'. As the AR teams were constantly discussing the study, we believed we had certainly implemented this stage. The stage following this Burns (2005) labels 'Writing', i.e. 'documenting', which we constantly did as the study progressed, especially during analysis stages. The twelfth and final stage Burns identifies is 'Presenting', i.e. delivering the results to an audience of readers. As this thesis has indicated, I was able to present details of our study on several occasions, both within Turkey and in nearby countries. Following completion of this thesis Ece and I intend to consider possibilities for co-authoring articles concerning our experience, one of which is currently on the issues involved with carrying out a long-term AR study. Another possibility would be a contribution to an EAP journal on what this study has revealed in terms of conferencing features and styles.

### **12.19 Reflexive summary for MCA Seven**

MCA seven was the culmination of analyses carried out in the previous six MCAs. By the start of MCA seven we felt our analytical tools showed enough refinement for us to cease adapting them. With the time saved due to this we were able to look more closely at conferencing styles.



### **12.20 Part three summary**

This part, which concerned the end of MCA seven, has looked at the sixth and last conference in this study. It enabled us to further identify which features of conferencing appeared to be dominant and resulting in successful outcomes. By focusing on the conferencing features used by Seda and then comparing them with those used by Ece in part one, it indicated how teachers may have different conferencing styles, and suggests reasons for these variations.

## Chapter Thirteen

### Summary of findings and discussion

#### 13.1 Introduction

The following extract is taken from the summary of this thesis on page six in order to illustrate the three levels on which this study worked:

*This research therefore involves three aims: firstly, to implement the framework for action research suggested by Burns (2005); secondly, to observe how collaborative teacher development may occur during action research while implementing this framework; thirdly, to locate and implement desirable features of conferencing on EAP essay writing in order to identify the relationship between these features and alterations on follow-up essay drafts.*

As the structure of this study consisted of three levels, this final chapter focuses on those three distinct but often inter-related areas: action research (AR), teacher development (TD) and conferencing. In part A it firstly summarises findings concerning AR, and then discusses related issues. Following this it looks at possible limitations of this study in relation to AR, then the significance and implications of its contribution with regard to action research and applied linguistics. It next outlines suggestions for follow-up AR. Parts B and C of this chapter then cover TD and conferencing, respectively.

## **PART A**

### **13.2a Action research: introduction**

The section below looks at theoretical aspects of AR noted in this study, followed by an outline and discussion of several practical issues involved in an AR study, particularly those relating to the difficulties of carrying out a long-term study such as this.

#### **13.2.1a Theoretical findings**

On reflection I feel this study has illustrated several important theoretical findings in relation to AR. Firstly, it would appear that the framework suggested by Burns (2005) proved to be an appropriate model for the AR study that forms the backbone of this thesis. As mentioned in chapter four, with its inter-related stages, it would appear to be more flexible and open to interpretation than, for example, the model suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). Burns (2005: 59) points out that the latter has been criticised by those such as McNiff (1988) who sees it as too prescriptive, and Ebbutt (1985) who sees Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model as one that moves in only one direction. Secondly, and following on from the previous point, this thesis I believe reflects the comment made originally in Burns (2005) and more recently in Burns (2010) that AR processes involve many interwoven aspects that do not necessarily occur in any fixed sequence. The latter point is exemplified in chapter eight, where I felt the order of the stages required adaptation. To expand upon this: 8.1 illustrates how it may be necessary to re-implement a previous stage. In the case of this study I felt there was a need to re-implement the planning and data collection stage in

order to carry out a further stage of analysis. What is clear from this study, though, is that the analysis stage of Burns (2005) requires a good deal more analysis than may be immediately noticeable.

### 13.2.2a: Mini-cycles of analysis (MCAs): introduction

Perhaps the key finding in this study in terms of AR is how the overall analysis stage of Burns (2005) suggested framework would appear to consist of several mini-cycles of analysis (MCA), with MCAs being related to each other. I noted how examples of MCAs began during the initial analysis of Stage One data (chapter six) and were evident from then until chapter twelve. It is noticeable that the outcome of one MCA appears to feed into the next, and thus I noted that due to the cyclical nature of this analysis stage, as the study progressed the AR team were able to streamline the approach to analysis in order to probe deeper into our data concerning conferencing.

**Table 13a: Analysis stage and MCAs**

<b>Burns (2005) Analysis Stage</b>						
<i>MCA One</i>	<i>MCA Two</i>	<i>MCA Three</i>	<i>MCA Four</i>	<i>MCA Five</i>	<i>MCA Six</i>	<i>MCA Seven</i>
<i>Chapter 6:</i>	<i>Chapters 7&amp;8:</i>	<i>Chapter 9.4:</i>	<i>Chapter 9.16:</i>	<i>Chapter 10:</i>	<i>Chapter 11:</i>	<i>Chapter 12:</i>
<b><i>First</i></b>	<b><i>Analysis as</i></b>	<b><i>Implementing</i></b>	<b><i>Second</i></b>	<b><i>Analysis of</i></b>	<b><i>Analysis of</i></b>	<b><i>Analysis of</i></b>
<b><i>analysis of</i></b>	<b><i>reflection on</i></b>	<b><i>features</i></b>	<b><i>analysis:</i></b>	<b><i>Stage Two</i></b>	<b><i>Stage Two</i></b>	<b><i>Stage Two</i></b>
<b><i>Stage One</i></b>	<b><i>Stage One</i></b>	<b><i>noted from</i></b>	<b><i>Stage Two</i></b>	<b><i>conference</i></b>	<b><i>conference</i></b>	<b><i>conference</i></b>
<b><i>conferences</i></b>	<b><i>conferences</i></b>	<b><i>MCA 1 &amp; 2</i></b>	<b><i>conference</i></b>	<b><i>two data</i></b>	<b><i>three data</i></b>	<b><i>four to six</i></b>
<b><i>1-6 data</i></b>	<b><i>1-6 data</i></b>		<b><i>one data</i></b>			<b><i>data</i></b>

#### **13.2.2.1a MCA One**

The initial MCA took place with data generated in Stage One Conferencing, and concerned the analysis of six resulting conference transcripts. The outcome was the establishment of twelve desirable features, plus a few undesirable features which teachers incorporated while conferencing. This MCA also illustrates how adapting Boyatzis (1998) – involving the coding of categories - had assisted with developing this AR study, plus the importance of defining terms with which the team worked, such as ‘desirable and in later MCAs ‘successfully

#### **13.2.2.2a MCA Two**

The second MCA firstly concerned analysis as reflection on data in order to decide how to proceed in this study, and led to adapting the framework of Burns (2005). To an extent, MCA Two and Three may belong to the same mini-cycle, and indicate how the borders of such MCAs may not be clearly defined.

#### **13.2.2.3a MCAs Three and Four**

The third MCA involved analysing and observing. In fact part of this MCA covered the ‘Observing’ stage of Burns (2005). The outcome was noting how team members had been able to implement five of the twelve desirable features of conferencing noted in MCA One. The second part of this MCA, which I have labelled MCA Four, illustrates how it may be necessary for the main focus of an AR study to shift, and enabled us to note categories of success when dealing with points in the conference.

#### **13.2.2.4a MCA Five**

The outcome of MCA Five was identifying what we believed were more specific features of conferencing that led to successful outcomes in relation to follow-up drafts. A key finding in terms of how this point relates to AR concerns how studies such as this required focus. The designation of categories and our illustrating data in tabular form resulted in a tighter focus.

#### **13.2.2.5a MCA Six**

This juncture of the study involved a reduction in the AR team and a more focused approach to the analysis. Our insight led us to work as a team of two, in contrast to the previous separate analyses and follow-up comparisons. A further critical moment was the final adaptation based upon MCA 6, which resulted in the analysis of conferences four to six becoming MCA 7, following which, we believed, no further refinement was necessary.

#### **13.2.2.6a MCA Seven**

Analysis of the fourth of our six sets of Stage Two conferencing data was the first part of an MCA that also covered conferences five and six. The MCA and resulting refinements led the AR team to the point where our development was complete in terms of establishing our research tools. Since the use of the same model was applied to conferences four, five and six, the analyses of these conferences which originally appeared in short separate chapters were later written up as one complete chapter in this thesis.

### **13.2.2.7a Overall summary of MCAs**

Refinements resulting from the cycle of MCAs outlined in 13.2.2a – 13.2.2.6a illustrate how in this study AR on conferencing data led to teacher development in the form of the creation of teacher knowledge and, again in a cyclical manner, better conferencing techniques.

### **13.3.1a Practical findings and research limitations: introduction**

In section 4.4 of this thesis I quoted Nunan (1993:46) who wrote: ‘...it is clear that action research is difficult, problematic, and, in some cases, inconclusive. It consumes a great deal of time, and often strains the goodwill of the teachers involved, as well as those with whom they work Aspects of what Nunan was perhaps referring to were clearly evident in this study: chapter nine explains how perhaps far too much time was consumed, and how a strain in goodwill was perhaps a contributory factor in Seda’s departure in chapter eleven, while tension was always apparent during data analysis phases. Other findings concerning limitations are outlined and discussed below. Section 10.5 outlines how the AR team adopted a means of developing the study which we later went back on, indicating how AR, rather than being a linear process, can, as Nunan states above (ibid) appear ‘messy

### **13.3.2a Inviting participation**

Since inviting participation would appear to be a face-threatening act, this study reflects the necessity for approaching this phase with delicacy, and perhaps reinviting those who initially show little inclination to participate. 8.6 outlines how, although it may appear to be of value to the study to have

participants who are familiar with research in that they are also involved in their own doctoral studies, the fact that they may need their own research time, as was the case with Nihat and Ömer, may prove to be problematic.

### **13.3.3a Departure**

Departure from this study tended to consist of three forms. The first concerned those such as Nihat and Ömer, leaving the IYTE department permanently and thus unable to continue. A second group consisted of those like Seda, who left the study permanently but remained in the IYTE department, while a third consisted of those who left the department and the study for temporary reasons, such as maternity. Of those who took part in the group and / or individual interviews outlined in chapter four, only two (Medine and Seda) were at IYTE on completion of this thesis. Eylem left IYTE to work elsewhere in Turkey shortly after marriage; on completion of his PhD, Ömer left to work in Switzerland, while Nihat left to take up the post as assistant director of studies at a newly-opened university in Izmir. It is perhaps interesting to note that no-one in this study was at IYTE from its inception to its completion. This study has also shown how issues arise when a member requests to leave the team. 10.5 explains Seda's problem with finding time to devote to data analysis, while 11.2 outlines how the AR team responded to Seda's eventual departure.

### **13.3.4a Data and involvement**

This study also shows how important it is to establish at the start of the study the conditions concerning rights of access to and ownership of data



generated, plus as far as is practically possible, what involvement in the study requires. 11.2 illustrates not only how Seda, although initially committed to the study, was unable to maintain her involvement, and how she agreed without being asked to do so to allow the remaining members of the team to use data she had helped to generate. It may, however, have been detrimental to the study had she refused such permission.

#### **13.3.5a Role-conflict**

7.3 illustrates how ethical dilemmas may emerge within an AR study. This first concerned a tension between my role as coordinator of writing and action researcher. This issue was resolved by my joining the AR team for Stage Two conferencing.

#### **13.4a Relationships: ethical**

Puchner and Smith (2008), writing on the tension between the personal and the professional, outline the ethical issues involved with researching those who are close to you. Although teachers at IYTE involved in this study were at the time (and currently still are) friends and colleagues of mine, they were not as close as the researchers in Puchner and Smith (grandfather and daughter) and the subject (grandson and son). Puchner and Smith (2008: 5) point out, though, how: 'Collaboration also does not eliminate the possibility of manipulation, which is another potential ethical problem that becomes particularly problematic when research participants are close to you'. Puchner and Smith (2008: 7) add how 'The potential for manipulation of those we have power over is always there, and we have to recognise that when the goal of

improving practice is intertwined with these selfish motives, the potential is even greater. With regard to the latter quote, 8.4 explains how, as coordinator EAP writing at IYTE I was Ece's line-manager. It would have been fairly easy for me to manipulate circumstances concerning her involvement in this study. Although I was grateful for her support for our study, I took care to ensure she received no preferential treatment concerning, for example, marking end of year exams. Similarly, I took care to ensure this was the case for students who were involved in both stages of conferencing.

### **13.5a Unforeseen issues**

A long-term study will always be susceptible to unforeseen events that may require an immediate or eventual solution. In the case of this study I have identified several events that resulted in a variety of limitations: 6.1.2, for example, outlines how the relocation of the faculty and the AR proved initially to be a set-back to the study, while overcoming the obstacles involving movement to the new faculty required a period of settling in time. Such occurrences as relocation cannot, however, be foreseen. Alterations in teacher timetables were also an issue. 6.1.3 explains how although I was originally promised teachers involved would be able to continue with classes within which students were engaging in conferences, I noticed this only seemed to apply in the short term. University summer holidays meant AR team members were unavailable and required us to meet on their and my return in order to reflect, while microphone stress resulted in my being unable to record members. Chapter ten highlights how close collaboration in the AR team is vital. I would suggest that working in the same or a nearby

environment at times, but certainly not always, enables impromptu research issues to be dealt with. This study also notes in 11.6.5 how tension may arise between pedagogical practice and research approaches. The final section of chapter eleven notes how another limitation may concern writing up analytical accounts. It is vital to do so in the correct order, so as not to be influenced in one's own analysis by previously writing up those of others. The value of post-analysis discussion to an AR study is evident in 12.3, outlining how small points may be clarified. At the same time this episode illustrates the limitations of working from transcribed accounts. Since they are often incomplete attempts to capture the speech event, working from transcripts may cause confusion and disagreement between AR team members. Generating transcripts from the recorded conference has to be seen as a collaborative event involving member-checking by all participants.

### **13.6a Summary**

As explained in 13.2.1, the AR team noted how over a five-year period it was possible, at least in a higher education EAP context, to implement the framework for AR suggested by Burns (2005). This thesis will, I believe, be of interest to those wishing also to implement this framework. Chapter one of this study commented on the paucity of AR in Turkey in recent years, and how this study might help alter the balance. It is hoped that the outcome will perhaps outline the possibilities for a resurgence of AR in Turkey, at least in the higher education sector there. On reflection, we felt it was significant that some stages of Burns (2005) may require adaptation, and that some may require more time to carry out than others. It is also significant that within the

overall stage of analysis of the framework suggested by Burns (2005) MCAs of analysis would appear to occur. The main implication of this study is that as a framework for AR, Burns (2005) would appear to be a viable tool with which to generate research data. A second implication is that it would appear possible, but not wholly unproblematic, for a person with responsibility for the team members to lead the study. Findings of this study would suggest, however, that active participation within the team, rather than a leader of an AR team, is more useful. My realisation of the latter point took place after becoming an actual AR team member for Stage Two conferencing.

### **13.7a Suggestions for further research**

Reflecting on this study has led me to note three suggestions for further research concerning the AR approach implemented: Firstly, that although Burns (2005) provided an adequate framework for this particular study which took place in an EAP higher education context and involved teachers in an academic atmosphere consisting of colleagues also involved in research (with perhaps relatively more time than colleagues in High Schools in Turkey), I believe there needs to be more such studies carried out using the same framework in Primary and Secondary educational institutions. Following on from the above, with AR carried out either in HE or High Schools, it would be useful to note if and in which particular ways some stages of Burns (2005) may require adaptation to suit local circumstances.

A key feature of this study is the realisation that MCAs tend to appear within the overall analysis stage. Perhaps other studies implementing the framework

suggested by Burns (2005) would clarify whether this was an isolated case or an instance of a general pattern. If the latter were found to be the case, then a comparison of how such MCAs evolve and relate to each other would perhaps prove fruitful, especially with regard to their leading to critical moments such as when no more refinement of the research tools are necessary. This study suggests that other potential areas for future research might well include the following: assessing how far teachers are able to implement points noted from an analysis, and working with teachers involved in producing transcripts and identifying data within them, plus overcoming microphone stress during interviews in an AR project.

## **Part B**

### **13.1.1b Teacher Development and Teacher Knowledge**

This part of the chapter, looks at this study firstly in terms of teacher development (TD). Although it is a separate part, it has to be pointed out that certain aspects already outlined in Part A, which dealt with action research, are related also to TD, as TD may occur both during and as a result of AR. Also related to AR and TD is teacher knowledge (TK), an area this chapter covers more thoroughly in 13.8.6, although in view of the interwoven elements of each, it is also referred to below where appropriate.

#### **13.1.2b The context for TD / TK in this study**

Following transcript analysis of both group and individual interviews, by basing our work on Burns (2005), three teachers at IYTE (not including myself) firstly read and discussed with me accounts of desirable conferencing

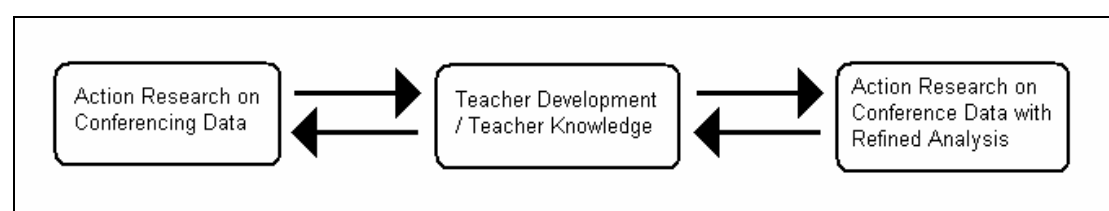
features noted following analysis resulting from Stage One conferencing. Next, they agreed on an essay on which to conference, and then provided students involved with an annotated pre-conference draft before planning and recording two conferences each. Following this, they and I then listened to the recordings and produced agreed transcripts of these conferences. From these transcripts they then, after agreeing on sections within Transcript One, and by relating the criteria of features in 6.4 to that transcript, observed examples of how far in Transcript One they and I felt the teacher concerned had been able to implement features listed as desirable by teachers involved in Stage One conferencing. They next read and discussed with me their varying accounts, and finally read for agreement and otherwise my account of this discussion.

By reflecting collaboratively on their own practice and that of others in the AR team, they constructed meanings of events and took on board implications arising. During Stage Two conferencing a second AR team, this time including myself, analysed the then current transcript plus five further transcripts in order to locate features within the conferences we regarded as having a strong relationship with successful alterations on the follow-up draft. By taking a close look at transcripts of themselves and others engaged in conferencing, teachers in this study located what it might be in terms of discourse features and moves that enables student writers to provide improvements in their follow-up drafts.

### 13.2.1b Teacher Development

In this study, AR on conferencing data led to teacher development. That is to say, the three areas of the thesis tended to overlap, and thus teacher development led to an improvement in our means of data analysis. This relationship is illustrated below in table 13b.

**Table 13b: AR, TD / TK and analysis relationship**



In contrast to the other two levels on which this study worked, those of AR and conferencing, there does not appear to be a similarly clear framework in which to place teacher development. Borg (2003b), in describing teacher development as an ‘unobservable dimension of teaching,’ explains how it is not always possible to measure such a feature. Mann (2005), however, clarifies many issues relating to development arising from AR. He explains how AR studies, such as the one this thesis represents, play a part in putting the classroom practitioner at the centre of efforts to understand and develop language teaching and learning practice, and how there are important reflective and developmental processes that need to be considered alongside AR; these are what Burns (2005: 57) terms ‘related branches

### 13.2.2b Self-direction and development

Placing self-development at the centre of his definition of language teacher development (LTD) Mann (2005) explains the strong relationship between

self-direction and self-development, and cites Hill (2000) who holds the view that 'it is healthy for professionals to have an active role in their own developmental processes'. This point is illustrated in this study, as AR team members at both stages of conferencing acted independently in order to analyse and reflect on data generated. In contrast, section 5.2 involving my attempt to impose conferencing styles on other team members illustrates an example of what Tomlinson (2003: 2) describes as the worst type of teacher development, as they would have been "...surreptitiously pushed in pre-determined directions."

Also referring to development, Borg (2003b) uses instead the term 'cognition' and defines teacher cognition as 'what teachers think, know and believe'. He writes of the relationships of these, which he terms, 'unobservable cognitive dimensions of teaching', to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom. In relation to this study, I use the term teacher development to refer to what teachers did in actual and later phases of the study based on what they discovered, and which consequently becomes teacher knowledge, at any given point. Presumably, they would implement their newly-gained knowledge in their own classroom activity and thus continue their own professional development in a spiral manner.

In terms of TD in this study, it is noticeable that there are two related aspects of development. Firstly, there is development internally. Edge (1999) refers to this as self-development at individual level. Secondly, there is the account of development of knowledge which this thesis as a text represents. The latter is



summarised at the end of each chapter within this thesis. Before dealing with my own development as a researcher in 13.8.3.1 and the development of individuals in 13.8.2, the following section provides the context within which TD and TK in this study was enabled.

On reflection, and working from Mann's (2005) core themes in teacher development, this thesis clearly illustrates an internal bottom-up study. The study enabled in-service development, with no need to attend courses. It was carried out on a voluntary basis, with little direct institutional support, and thus contrasts well with top-down continuing professional development (CPD) which generally represents institutional requirements. The study largely valued the insider view, and was instigated by individuals working both independently and in groups. Although the thesis is a complete document, the study remains unfinished, and I plan to integrate the development written up in future teacher education programmes at IYTE. As mentioned in 13.8.1b, with regard to the context provided here, along with the explanation above of how the study reflects Mann's (2005) core themes, I feel there are two types of development to consider, and these are discussed below.

#### **13.4.1b      Researcher development**

In terms of myself as a researcher, I developed an awareness of key issues involved in soliciting interest in a study, in recording interviews so as to generate data, and in the myriad problems of creating and working from transcripts. Such matters as these are outlined in chapter four, in relation to setting up the group and individual interviews. Other issues concerning

researcher development were related to negotiating access, getting a feel for research instruments used, understanding the complexity of the dynamics of relationships between AR team members, and of course of realising the difficulties involved with using technology to capture the crucial speech events without which this study would have been impossible.

#### **13.4.2b Research ethics**

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the development of any researcher development concerns an appreciation of the ethics involved in any research study. Taking advantage of those who may or may not fully comprehend what they are agreeing to is not morally acceptable. My later realisation of how I had not actually requested the permission of students who participated in Stage One conferencing is an example of unethical coercion. This was rectified for Stage Two, prior to which I requested students' permission in a letter (Appendix J).

#### **13.5b Individual development**

In terms of the development of individuals within the AR teams for Stages One and Two conferencing, 7.6.1 explains that while speculating on how to proceed to Stage Two conferencing, AR team members reflected on points in order to construct teacher knowledge in the form of more refined conferencing tools. 9.14.1 and 9.15.1 illustrate how during Stage Two conferencing Ece reflected on criteria in order to adapt them, while 9.18 summarises how, based on analyses the AR team noted the emergence of categories.

### **13.6b Teacher development: significance**

In view of Borg's concluding remark (2003b) that 'much more research on second and foreign language teachers' practices and conditions in teaching is required,' I feel the study outlined in this thesis makes a valid contribution to the field of applied linguistics, and perhaps partially fills a research space, in that it concerns TD based upon AR within Turkey that took place over a five-year period, providing an account of conferencing carried out by teachers of English in the higher education sector in Turkey in an EAP context. The latter point is perhaps made more pertinent when one considers the following: Borg's (2003b) survey of 64 studies in the field of teacher cognition published between 1976 and 2002 show how only two have taken place in Turkey: Sendan and Roberts (1998) and Tercanlioglu (2001). The work of Sendan and Roberts (1998) concerned a case study of one student, while that of Tercanlioglu (2001) concerned teachers of reading. Borg (2003b:104) also reports two studies in teacher cognition in writing instruction, Burns (1992) and Tsui (1996), both of which analysed classroom practices, but without dealing specifically with feedback on writing. Therefore research accounts such as this not only illustrate the possibility for successfully carrying out AR in the EAP environment of the higher education sector in Turkey, but how such research could, by implementing the framework suggested by Burns (2005), contribute to teacher development in other pedagogical contexts.

### **13.7.1b Teacher knowledge**

Related to TD as an outcome of AR is, of course, the development of teacher knowledge (TK). Whereas it was noted above how in comparison with AR, TD

does not appear to be written up in terms of models or frameworks, teacher knowledge issues located in this study indicate the interwoven aspects of AR, TD and TK.

#### **13.8.7.2b Types of knowledge**

Mann (2005:106) explains how received knowledge is parcelled up into topics on pedagogic components such as second-language acquisition. In contrast, I noted how this study allowed for a movement away from what Mann (ibid) terms 'a reliance of transmission methodology,' towards a constructivist model described in Roberts (1998). In terms of individual knowledge, Mann considers how the movement away from the transmission of knowledge framework described in Fanselow (1988) towards viewing teachers as legitimate knowers, has led to a greater consideration of the types of teacher knowledge. In this regard, this study produced what I would argue is primarily 'usable knowledge', (Lageman 2002); i.e. having located features of conferencing that tended to relate to successful outcomes on follow-up drafts, I would expect teachers to use such pedagogical tools with their classes. Using terminology in Mann (2005), this study represents an example of constantly reshaping knowledge occurring as a combination of the following: external knowledge received from pre-service courses (received and declarative knowledge); knowledge gained from the teaching context (local and situated knowledge), along with individual, / personal, practical and usable knowledge. In terms of situated knowledge developing over time, this study highlights how individual knowledge in the form of usable pedagogical skills, a factor in the combination described above, adds to a teacher's

knowledge base. As Mann (2005: 107) suggests, further research is required into how teachers develop and build knowledge bases.

## **Part C**

### **13.1c Conferencing: introduction**

The third part of this chapter looks at discoveries made by both AR teams concerning conferencing, and continues to illustrate how action research on conferencing data resulted in teacher development in the form of newly-constructed teacher knowledge that would add to the knowledge base (13.8.6.2b) of teachers involved in this study.

This part firstly looks at points noted in relation to the detailed analyses carried out by myself and the AR team at the end of Stage One conferencing. It then looks at further points noted during Stage Two conferencing which involved a newly-formed AR team that also included my own direct participation. Whereas the first concerned analysis to locate desirable conferencing features that AR team members would take on board for the Stage Two conferencing, the second was more concerned with noting what it was about conferences that contributed to what we noted as ‘successful’ alterations in follow-up drafts. An extension of this was the identification of a teacher-discourse move. The third part of this chapter ends with an outline of the overall significance of findings made in this study concerning conferencing, plus noting limitations and, in 13.7c, suggestions for further research.

### **13.2.1c Stage One Conferencing**

Chapter five explained how the original AR team carried out two conferences each. Data generated by these enabled us to locate what we felt were features of conferencing teachers should be encouraged to implement. Sections below outline findings in relation to this.

#### **13.2.1.1c Desirable conferencing features**

Table 13.3 (below) illustrates how, based upon work by Boyatzis (1998) on category coding, the outcome of the analysing / reflecting stage of Burns (2005), outlined in chapter six involving Stage One conferencing, was a list of twelve features noted as 'desirable' by the current AR team. This table also indicates where in this thesis more details may be found concerning each feature.

**Table 13c: desirable conferencing features**

6.4.1	Providing a background / overview
6.4.2	Limiting the number of points to deal with
6.4.3	Helpful conference discourse markers
6.4.4	Encouraging self-correction
6.4.5	Providing praise and mitigating comments
6.4.6	Providing helpful examples
6.4.7	Suitable pronoun choice
6.4.8	Negotiation in the L1
6.4.9	Pausing to encourage interaction
6.4.10	Questioning to increase interaction
6.4.11	Clear instructions for follow-up drafts
6.4.12	Analysing follow-up drafts

### **13.2.1.2c Stage One: undesirable conferencing features noted**

Analysis also enabled the AR team to locate undesirable features of conferencing. These are outlined in 6.3.3.5.1 and 6.3.3.5.2, and concern two types of writer avoidance strategies: by complete omission, and by simplification. It should thus be noted that conferencing may not always result in suitable outcomes on the follow-up draft.

### **13.3.1c Stage Two Conferencing**

The next phase of this study then noted initially which of the above features the AR team in Stage Two conferencing were able to implement. The description of each feature was adapted. Table 13.4 lists in order the five most dominant features.

**Table 13d: dominant features located**

Error correction
Teacher-questioning
Praise
Instructions for revision
Discourse markers

### **13.3.2c Successful conferencing features**

Due to time constraints concerning the above, the study shifted towards locating what were felt to be successful conferencing features in relation to outcomes on follow-up drafts. We noted how locating points dealt with by the teacher in the conference aided our analysis, and would recommend this approach. As a result we were then able to describe the treatment by the teacher of each point in two of the six categories we had noted in 10.6, which

is another approach we would recommend. These two categories appear below in table 13.5

**Table 13e: Categories of ‘success**

<b>Category one</b>	Points were noted on the pre-conference draft and dealt with successfully, in that the student was able to utilise them to make suitable improvements in the follow-up draft.
<b>Category two</b>	Points were noted on the pre-conference draft and dealt with less successfully, in that the student was unable to utilise them to make suitable improvements in the follow-up draft.

Analysis of data generated in Stage Two enabled us to note the following: Limitations concerning the language levels of students with whom to conduct conferences may be partially overcome by using the L1, while providing students with an annotated copy might also assist. We would also suggest that the follow-up draft should reflect the writer’s aims, and not be a means of satisfying the ‘teacher as editor, Other aims of the teacher should be to encourage discussion in order to elicit possible courses of action the student might take.

Continuing our refinement of analysis, we next extended the use of locating points and categorising them onto noting how each point, as a result of conferencing, had been dealt with by the student in the follow-up draft. Table 13f outlines how this was done.



**Table 13f (originally table 11c)**

<b>Draft One Point</b>	<b>Turn(s)</b>	<b>Feature(s)</b>	<b>Draft two</b>	<b>Category</b>
6: 'increase the quantity of penalties'	50-68	L1	'introduce stricter penalties'	One

Working with the above table enabled us to locate even further which specific features of conferencing appeared to result in success in terms of improvements in the student's follow-up draft. That is, when the teacher engaged in eliciting possible answers from the student, when the teacher questioned the student on parts of the essay concerned, when correction took place, and when the student was provided with clear instructions for revision.

### **13.4c Significance**

With its focus on what happens in the writing conference and its relationship with the revision process, this study adds significantly perhaps to the still limited research into conferencing. It identifies relationships between what the team felt were desirable conferencing features and what they felt were successful alterations made on follow-up essay drafts. In doing this the study responds to the comment made by Hyland and Hyland (2006: 96), previously mentioned in 2.4.1, on the effects of oral response. The study also responds to studies investigated by Goldstein and Conrad (1990), mentioned in 2.4.6, which also looked at the role of discourse in conferencing. Perhaps more importantly this study reiterates their conclusion that concerning the features used and moves implemented, 'the type of verbal interaction taking place in the conference has an influence on the type of subsequent revision

Having established what we considered the most valuable features, we next identified what we believe may be two suitable, although contrasting, discourse moves for teachers to adopt during conferencing: questioning followed by eliciting, or eliciting followed by questioning.

### **13.5c Summary of key features of conferencing**

It may be the case, as this study suggests, that certain features of conferencing that both AR teams identified are more likely to lead to what we felt were successful alterations in follow-up drafts. These are outlined in table 13g

**Table 13g: key features of conferencing**

Clear instructions for follow-up drafts
Eliciting
Questioning
Correcting

Our data suggests also that the use of the L1 to implement any or all of these features is advisable. A key implication of this study is that, by adopting such features, along with the conferencing ‘moves’ outlined in chapter twelve, teachers of writing would be better equipped to conference with students on their work with respect to making successful alterations on their follow-up drafts.

### **13.6c Limitations concerning conferencing**

Taken as a whole, this study looks at short term improvements in writing carried out by twelve students. It involved five teachers while doing so, and

concerned the relationship between first drafts and alterations on follow-up drafts. Unlike Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997), it does not look at the first drafts of the next essay written by the students in the same study. As outlined in 12.4, a key area in which I felt the study was affected concerned providing students with a teacher-corrected pre-conference draft. Ece and I noted how this made it harder to detect how what took place in the conference itself was related to what we had identified as 'successful' alterations to the follow-up draft. A possible solution to the conflict between research and pedagogic goals referred to in 12.1 would be to explain to students why first drafts were to be given back only prior to the conference.

### **13.7c Further research into conferencing**

On reflection, it may be the case that longer-term studies concerning conferencing may be necessary. In doing this and further analysing data generated in this study, I feel it would be of value to investigate more thoroughly the role played by the L1 during conferencing. It may also be valuable to locate and examine the role of interpersonal, pedagogic and informational exchanges in conferences. A third potential area for future research would certainly concern the degree to which conferencing may motivate student writers.

### **13.8c Final comment**

By engaging in the AR framework suggested by Burns (2005), this study has located desirable features of oral conferences carried out by teachers with individual student writers that enabled improvements on follow-up essay

drafts. It is my hope that teachers of writing will take on board such teacher-created knowledge in the form of features noted, and that they will, where possible, seek to implement such a feedback method in their pedagogical repertoire. Where practical, and although perhaps on occasions time-consuming, the AR team concluded that conferencing should be implemented in writing programmes due to its capacity to motivate students. Conferencing does not, however, need to be carried out on a strictly organised basis in the teacher's office. It may, as exemplified by both Medine and Eylem in the investigative stage of this study in chapter four, take place during a quiet classroom moment.

It is my hope that this study will indicate what Somekh and Zeichner (2009: 19) term the 'potent methodology' of AR, which by combining action and research provides an opportunity for teachers who engage in AR to change things, changes that are 'locally appropriate within the global world they inhabit. As a final comment, however, it is also my hope that this study will support the work of Jourdenais (2009: 655), who states: '...by encouraging teachers to participate in the research community as investigators of their own teaching practices, we can assist them not only in enhancing their own classroom practices, but also in expanding the domain of language education research to include more classroom-oriented foci, thereby, perhaps, expanding the relevance of applied linguistics research to a wider community of practitioners

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**The appendices below have been reduced to conform to Warwick University Graduate School Doctoral thesis submission guidelines regarding length. Should they be required by examiners, a complete version of the appendices may currently be obtained from Dr Sue Wharton, Centre for Applied Linguistics, Warwick University, UK.**

**Appendix A:**  
**Request for permission to carry out research**

21st February 2006

To: Assistant Professor Aşkın Haluk Yıldırım.

Subject: Request for permission to carry out doctoral research in IYTE during semester 2.

After recent discussions in the UK with my PhD supervisor, the next step in my doctoral research involves interviewing teachers of writing in IYTE. I would like to request official permission to firstly approach these teachers in order to solicit interest in the initial stages of getting useful data from which to work. I intend to assess interest among teachers of writing in IYTE by handing out a letter that will be open for all to see. Any questions teachers may have can be dealt with on a face-to face basis.

The next stage will be to invite teachers who have indicated an interest in assisting my research to attend a group interview on a list of topics related to teaching academic essay writing. I would also like permission to arrange a date, time and place in the IYTE building for this interview which will last between 30-45 minutes.

With your permission and the permission of teachers involved, I would like to make an audio-recording of the open discussion that will consist of points arising. This recording will not be available to anyone apart from myself and will only be used for purposes of identifying emerging themes to research. Teachers participating in the group discussion will have the opportunity to delete anything on the tape which they feel may misrepresent them or damage their personal or professional reputation in any way.

The audio-recording will be analysed only by myself. Notes will be taken of this recording of some parts of the interview, while other parts may be transcribed for the purpose of follow-up interviews. If teachers request this, transcripts will include only pseudonyms. The transcripts will be sent only to my supervisor in the UK to enable discussion between her and myself about themes that have emerged that we both feel are relevant to my doctoral studies. All audio-tapes will be stored safely and kept for a period that satisfies the ethical guidelines of the university authorities. After this period the tapes will be destroyed.

Following the above I would then like permission to approach selected individual teachers from the group described above in order to carry out individual interviews that will be based on themes emerging from the previous interview. This second round of interviewing and recording will also require a date, time place that suits the IYTE academic calendar and teachers' timetables. All individual interviews will be recorded and the procedure for this and subsequent action will follow an identical pattern to that described in the group interview stage above.

I very much hope that you will be able to provide official permission for the above and fully intend to continue to inform you, as Director of IYTE, of my research here.

Please tick one of the 0 below

I agree to the above research stages taking place in the IYTE prep building by Wayne Trotman in March and April 2006: 0

I do not agree to the above research taking place in the IYTE prep building: 0

Signed: .....

## **Appendix B:**

### **Pilot study interview invitation**

**Teacher's name:** .....

I have recently begun doctoral studies with a university in the UK. I now need to carry out a pilot study to discover teachers' opinions. As my area of research concerns academic writing, I would like to interview teachers who work in this field. I would therefore like to invite you to attend a group interview along with other teachers of writing. You are of course under no obligation to attend this interview. Would you be willing and able to attend an informal discussion that will take place in the IYTE building at a convenient time for all concerned?

As it is not easy to take notes of an on-going discussion I would like to make an audio-recording of the group interview which will last approximately thirty minutes.

In accordance with research ethics, you will not be required to provide your name or any other personal details unless you wish to do so. Apart from myself, in the role of research student, no-one else will have access to the recording after we leave the room. If you wish to delete anything you have said then you may of course do this.

The taped interview will be analysed, notes will be taken and some parts may be transcribed. This information will be sent to my PhD supervisor so that we can then discuss possible lines of future research. The tape will be kept in a safe place, also in line with research ethics, and destroyed after the necessary time has elapsed.

Please indicate below whether you are or are not willing and able to attend the group interview.

I wish to attend and understand that the interview will be recorded: 0

I do not wish to attend the interview: 0

Signed:

.....

## **Appendix C:**

### **Request to enable teachers to be free for interviews**

February 24th 2006

To: The Director of Studies at IYTE

From: Wayne Trotman

Subject: PhD Request

Aşkın Bey

I have arranged for the following teachers to be available on Tuesday March 7th between 15.30 and 16.15 to take part in a recorded group interview to assist with my doctoral research. As this is a vital stage in data collection, could you please ensure they are not obliged to attend other meetings in the IYTE building at the same time.

Medine Türkmen; Ozlem Çimen; Nihat Koçyiğit; Devrim Bilgin; Eylem Mersin; Ömer Eşit

Many thanks and best wishes.

#### **Appendix D:** **Group interview questions and transcript**

##### **A: Before we start:**

Points to be covered in opening: thanks for coming along: purpose: assure confidentiality: length of interview

##### **B. Grand tour lead-in:**

Talk me briefly through what qualities you feel a decent writing teacher needs?

##### **C. OK. Can we move onto **testing and assessment** now?**

Let's discuss how we assess our students' writing **in exams**. Would anyone like to start?

**BACK-UP:**What are your views on how we should test students course work writing at IYTE?

What about our **writing exams**? Any comments anyone? (do you think we assess accurately or not?)

##### **D. OK. Let's talk a bit now about **portfolio assessment**.**

Would anyone like to begin? How well is it working?

##### **BACK-UP:**

How do you all feel about portfolio assessment? And how do you think students feel?

Would you change anything about our portfolio assessment method? What? Why?

For those who do diaries:

Any comments about students' diaries anyone? When you read them, how do you respond?

##### **E. OK, can we move onto **students' files**?**

Could you describe how you deal with students' files. What do you do?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of doing this?

(Advantages/disadvantages)

Would you recommend this method to others? Why/not?

## **F (The big questions)**

### **On feedback, but with progressive focusing**

What does the term feedback mean to you?

Let's discuss possible views on feedback now.

What are your views of the effect of feedback on students writing?

Let's talk a bit about reading students' classwork essays now. Any comments anyone?

Talk me through what you do with essays that you collect in.

How do you all feel about providing written feedback on students' essays?

Could you describe how you generally provide feedback on the essays?

Comments / categories?

Can you remember examples of things you've written recently?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of that method? Why do you use this method?

**The transcript for Appendix D has been deleted to conform to Warwick University Graduate School Doctoral thesis submission guidelines regarding length. Should it be required by examiners, this and a complete version of the appendices may be obtained from Dr Sue Wharton, Centre for Applied Linguistics, Warwick University, UK.**

## **Appendix E**

### **Invitation to check the group interview transcript: 11th April, 2006**

Dear Colleague,

As you will recall, as part of my research a group interview of which you were a member took place on March 7th. Based on the recording of that interview I have typed out a transcript – a document of who said what. Prior to the next stage of my research I would like to check the accuracy of the transcript with all who attended. I am therefore offering you the opportunity to listen to the tape and read the transcript. As with my original offer at the start of the interview, you may ask for parts to be deleted if you feel they misrepresent your real opinions or may damage your reputation. You may also, where necessary, clarify and / or correct comments on the transcript for me. Additionally, you may if you wish qualify some of your remarks if you feel they need anything important adding to them. You are of course under no obligation to do any of the above, but please let me know if you wish to. When I have an acceptable transcript of the interview I would then like to perhaps interview you individually. Would you be willing to be interviewed about your comments on the transcript? Please tick one from the list below.

I wish to listen to the interview and check the transcript. I wish only to check the transcript

I wish only to listen to the interview. I do not wish to either listen to the interview or check the transcript.

## Appendix F

### Stage One Conferencing Transcripts

Only one of the six transcripts for Appendix F is included. The remainder have been deleted to conform to Warwick University Graduate School Doctoral thesis submission guidelines regarding length. Should they be required by examiners, a complete version of the appendices may be obtained from Dr Sue Wharton, Centre for Applied Linguistics, Warwick University, UK.

**Nihat TSC 1 with Buğra (male) 27.12.06. 2.00pm in his office. 4 minutes. (Deleted)**

**Nihat TSC 2 with Gökem (male) 27.12.06. 2.15pm in his office. 4 minutes. (Deleted)**

**Ömer Eşit TSC 1: 09.01.07. In his office with Gökhan (male): 9 minutes**

- 1 **Ömer** I have two students of mine in my office with me now: Gözde and Gökhan. Welcome Gözde and Gökhan. Let's start with you Gökhan. I have your essay with me now on my desk. Let's start with the first paragraph. In our lesson I'm sure you all remember that we discussed how to write a process essay, and I'm sure you know that in the first paragraph we want you to write some sentences that will give us background information and a thesis statement, as well. So here I can see some sentences; I think the first two or three sentences, which give us the necessary background information, and I appreciate your attempt to use some new words
- 2 **Gökhan:** yes, I tried to look up in a dictionary and I tried to use new words
- 3 **Ömer:** but of course the more you use new words, the riskier it gets
- 4 **Gökhan:** yes I know
- 5 **Ömer:** so here for example in the second sentence I can see a word which has a wrong form. I think 'lately' for example; 'lately' is an adverb, but let me read the sentence. (Ömer reads: "As it is shown in the lately surveys..."). Instead of 'lately' you should use (two second pause)
- 6 **Gökhan:** 'latest' maybe
- 7 **Ömer:** maybe 'recent surveys', so its form is not correct, anyway, so it's as I told you before, it's normal. And, by the way, Gökhan could you please show me where your thesis statement is? Which sentence is the thesis statement in your first paragraph? (Gökhan reads the sentence: "It will be.."). The last sentence you mean? So Gökhan, do you remember why we write a thesis statement? I mean what is the function of a thesis statement in an essay?.
- 8 **Gökhan:** in an essay the thesis statement should explain the functions of the essay. I mean the thesis statement includes some vocabularies which can explain the other body and conclusion paragraphs. There must be some explanations about the other paragraphs
- 9 **Ömer:** so you mean the thesis statement should tell the reader what he or she's going to read.
- 10 **Gökhan:** yes I do
- 11 **Ömer:** and do you think your thesis statement fulfilled this function?



- 12 **Gökhan:** I tried to do my best but I don't know whether it's suitable or not
- 13 **Ömer:** actually again we have the same problem with the last sentence I think. Again I can see some words that you've just found I think, in a dictionary, and you've tried to use them in your thesis statement, like, for example, 'coherence' and 'to participate in' or 'insanity', so I think these words are new and you've just found them in a dictionary.
- 14 **Gökhan:** I learnt 'coherence'... I tried to use ... in the first paragraph
- 15 **Ömer:** There are some grammar mistakes in this sentence: 'to be participate in'. Actually you cannot use the verb 'to be' here. Anyway, you should change it and again look it up please and try to find the correct form. And you should change the thesis statement a little bit, because as far as I can see it doesn't express the main idea here. When I read the thesis statement I should be able to find all the aspects of the topic, but I cannot get it when I read the thesis statement here
- 16 **Gökhan:** maybe I can be more successful
- 17 **Ömer:** And by the way, as I told you in the class, each paragraph in an essay should reflect a different aspect of the main idea or the topic, so do you think you considered this rule while you were writing your paragraphs?
- 18 **Gökhan:** I tried to explain it step by step, the paragraphs, and as we saw in the paragraphs there is three steps. In the first paragraph I tried to explain the device which we need; in the next paragraph I tried to explain the importance of subscribing to an internet server company. And in the conclusion I focused on the importance of internet
- 19 **Ömer:** and if we go back to the first paragraph, Gökhan, I can see a question there. Why did you use that question? Does it have a special function?
- 20 **Gökhan:** I think I forgot to continue with this question.
- 21 **Ömer:** no, I mean I'm not sure if you remember, but in the lesson we read something; remember? It's a useful technique; your book says, I mean, if you ask a question in the first paragraph it can capture the reader's interest; so is this the reason why you wrote and asked the question..
- 22 **Gökhan:** yes it was the reason here
- 23 **Ömer:** ok, and you have three paragraphs in the body.
- 24 **Gökhan:**... yes, and a conclusion
- 25 **Ömer:** by the way if we check the paragraphs in the body again we can see some grammar mistakes; for example, in paragraph two the verb 'depend' hasn't been used correctly, so you should change it and you should correct it; just check it in your dictionary. And also in the first paragraph in the body we have a very long sentence that should be divided in to two, I think, you should separate these, OK?
- 27 **Gökhan:** maybe I should use a comma or a full stop
- 28 **Ömer:** yeah, a full stop or a semi-colon; just think about it. And what about the last paragraph? Here I can see an example.
- 29 **Gökhan:** I had seen it in main course book about Neil Armstrong: (he explains here the "one small step" quote) I used that sentence in the conclusion part

- 30 **Ömer:** so you compared the landing on the moon to the invention of the internet.
- 31 **Gökhan:** yes, I mean that
- 32 **Ömer:** alright ok, thank you, Gökhan.
- 33 **Gökhan:** thanks for your contribution. I tried to do my best
- 34 **Ömer:** ok, and now you're supposed to write your second draft. Just consider these things; keep them in mind and please try to correct them. ok?
- 35 **Gökhan:** thanks
- 36 **Ömer:** thank you.

**Ömer Eşit TSC 2: 09.01.07 . TSC with Gözde (female): 7 minutes. (Deleted)**

**Seda TSC 1 on 11.01.07. in her office with both Gamze 15 minutes (Deleted)**

**Seda TSC 2 on 11.01.07. In her office with Gökseven. 6 minutes. (Deleted)**

## **Appendix G**

### **Notes for teachers on conferencing**

#### **Personalising Feedback on Second Language Writing: Teacher-Student Conferencing**

##### **Advantages**

Research suggests students typically receive more focused and usable comments during TSC than via written feedback (Zamel, 1985). The main advantage of TSC is that it can supplement the limitations of one-way written feedback and provides opportunities, via dialogue, for teacher-student negotiation of meaning. The interactive nature of TSC allows the teacher to respond to cultural and other needs by clarifying meaning and resolving ambiguity. TSC saves the teacher time on detailed marking and is good for learners with auditory learning preferences; it also allows students to ask questions about the feedback, discover their own strengths and weaknesses and help them construct a plan for further drafts. Good TSC requires active student participation, especially in the form of asking questions and clarifying meaning. TSC may lead to positive longer lasting effects on their writing. (Patthey-Chavez and Ferris 1997).

##### **Disadvantages**

Some researchers have doubts about the value of TSC. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) question the value of TSC due to students' inhibitions, especially about working with (and especially questioning) authority figures such as teachers. This may lead passive students to simply accept the teachers' comments without question. TSC is also time-consuming and requires good interaction skills on the part of the teacher. It also requires a decent level of aural comprehension on the part of the student. The use of TSC is therefore intuitively attractive – and supported by the positive experiences of many teachers – but empirical research on this area is rather limited.

## **Forms**

TSC is typically carried out on a one-to-one basis outside the classroom and focuses on either drafts in progress and how to improve them, completed drafts or student writing strategies. Where students might be inhibited, TSC often takes place in groups and involves peer as well as teacher feedback. TSC may be also done on an ad hoc (unplanned) basis during lessons; it may be an optional extra or a compulsory feature of the course; some students may prefer not to participate in TSC. When, where and how long to do TSC are issues to be resolved early. TSC endings should always offer something for students to address in their work, or a possible course of action for improvement in their writing.

**The remainder of notes on conferencing on the following topics has been deleted to conform to Warwick University Graduate School Doctoral thesis submission guidelines regarding length.**

## **Planning for conferences**

### **Teacher-student conferencing planning decisions:**

## **Conducting conferences**

## **Appendix H**

### **Group interview questions**

Dear.....

Firstly, thanks for agreeing to continue helping me with this project. There are two aims of this meeting:

1. to look back on what happened in our first conferences a year ago
2. to look ahead to the next based on what we noticed from our first experience

**A:** I want you to look back 12 months to the conferences you carried out with your two students in the old building. Think about them for a few seconds. What were the students' names? / How did you choose them? / What had they written about? How was the topic chosen? / How did you deal with their first drafts? / How did you set up the conference? / What do you remember about the conference with each student?

Where did you do it? / How did you feel? / What else do you remember?

**B:** Then I put together a transcript of the conference and gave you a copy to read and confirm was correct. You agreed. After reading it, what do you remember about the transcript of each conference?

**C:** Based on what was discussed in the first conference each student produced a second draft of their work. I analysed draft one and two to detect changes and improvements. I gave you copies of both drafts and asked you to do the same. Then in the early summer I interviewed you and we discussed my analysis. Think back: What issues did we discuss at that interview?

If you have the time, please read my notes about conferencing. Which ideas would you like to introduce to your next conference? Please bring this sheet to the interview

**Appendix I**  
**Invitation to join the action research team**  
**February 13th, 2008**

Dear Ece,

As you are perhaps aware, I am involved in a research study concerning teachers providing oral feedback on essays written by students at IYTE. I would like to invite you to become a participant in this project. You do not need to reply immediately to this offer but you may do so if you wish. You are under no obligation whatsoever to participate, and you may not wish to do so. In this case, as a researcher I will fully understand and also both accept and respect your decision without asking you to explain your reasons. If you agree to participate then it is important for you to read the following. The next stage of my research will involve three teachers plus myself providing oral feedback on problem-solution essays written by IYTE students. Both Seda and Nihat have agreed to assist with this. However, as Ömer is now in Switzerland the study requires a replacement and I feel that as an experienced teacher of writing you would be an ideal replacement. I would also like to think you will find the experience interesting and useful in your present and future teaching. I would like you to carry out the following: choose two students from your C writing class with whom you think you would like to discuss their problem-solution essays. Following this, I would like you to read and provide written feedback on the two essays. I would then ask you later to arrange to talk to the students about their essays. This stage would be recorded for us to analyse what was said by both you and the students. At a later date I would next like us to look closely at a transcript of what was said. In order to carry out the above I will make available to you the key findings from the research thus far, and would very much like to discuss the project in more detail at any agreed time in the near future. I look forward to hearing from you on the above. Best wishes,

**Appendix J**  
**Letter to students concerning Stage Two Conferencing**

March 28th 2008

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to help with my research. I would like to explain what this will involve. Firstly I would like to record you and your writing teacher talking together about the first draft of your recent problem solution essay. You may listen to the recording and make any necessary changes. Only the following teachers will also listen to the recording: Wayne Trotman, Seda Hanim and Ece Hanim. Secondly, I will type a transcript of what you and your teacher said about your work. You may check this in my office and make any necessary changes. The transcript will be read by only the above tea. After the discussion about your essay we would like you to write a second draft of your problem-solution essay. Only the three teachers named above will then look at both drafts. Best wishes,

## Appendix K

### Stage Two Conference Transcripts

Only one transcript for Appendix K has been included. The remaining five have been deleted to conform to Warwick University Graduate School Doctoral thesis submission guidelines regarding length. Should they be required by examiners, a complete version of the appendices may be obtained from Dr Sue Wharton, Centre for Applied Linguistics, Warwick University, UK.

**Wayne conferencing with Gülen: March 20th, 2008. 9 minutes 30 seconds. (Deleted).**

**Wayne conferencing with Ceylin: 26th March 2008. 8 minutes. (Deleted).**

**Ece conferencing with Alpay: March 27th 2008: 18 minutes 30 seconds (Deleted)**

**Ece conferencing with Ekrem: March 29th, 2008. 6 minutes 30 seconds**

- 1 Ece: erm let's start with the title.. er this is the topic
- 2 Ekrem: yes..this is my topic
- 3 Ece: ok.er.have you thought of a title?
- 4 Ekrem: yes.er..
- 5 Ece: mmm..what?
- 6 Ekrem: just the title can be 'safe road'
- 7 Ece: safe road.a good one.. yeah.fine.. er the first two here
- 8 Ekrem: yes and I also thought about the traffic jam is the biggest problem in Turkey...instead of this sentence we can use er 'the traffic jam'
- 9 Ece: mmm
- 10 Ekrem: 'is the most important problem in Turkey'
- 11 Ece: it's ok..it's still ok ..the biggest problem.the most important..it's ok as you see I haven't underlined this but the thing is 'the traffic jam' (line 2)
- 12 Ekrem: instead of 'the' we can use a or
- 13 Ece: nothing..
- 14 Ekrem: nothing
- 15 Ece: nothing.yes.because it's not something specific..erm (reading) 'according to the government's average'.. what do you mean here? (line 3)
- 16 Ekrem: (reading) 'according to the government's average'.....er I just thought about yesterday also..
- 17 Ece: mmm
- 18 Ekrem: 'according to the government's.....
- 19 Ece: mm
- 20 Ekrem: er as 'average' means in Turkish
- 21 Ece: yes//
- 22 Ekrem: //'ortalama'
- 23 Ece: yes.. ah I see but I guess we don't say it that way.think of a different wording for it.ok..think about it..(reading line 4) 'it will increase without doubtly'
- 24 Ekrem: without doubt

- 25 Ece: yes.doubt'..yes..erm..(reading line 5) 'shouldn't drive their cars'?
- 26 Ekrem: shouldn't drive car
- 27 Ece: or 'shouldn't drive'.no need to say "their car" or "cars".ok?  
(reading line 7) 'they are sleepy if so there are a lot of accidents'  
..what's the problem here?
- 28 Ekrem: I think there is..I couldn't see the exact problem
- 29 Ece: mmm.....
- 30 Ekrem: .....if so//
- 31 Ece: //‘otherwise’ you should have used...? (eliciting) ‘otherwise there?..
- 32 Ekrem: there can be
- 33 Ece: can be..will be..might be ahah? ok.. (reading line 9) ‘use their cars’ .....instead of ‘using cars’.. this is repetition
- 34 Ekrem: yeah
- 35 Ece: so..what can you do here?
- 36 Ekrem: (reading lines 8-9) ‘government.....not to use their cars a lot’
- 37 Ece: mmm
- 38 Ekrem: people..we can omit.instead of using cars’
- 39 Ece: mm..yes we can omit this one or instead..comma.instead people could or should share cars’.ok..(reading line 11) ‘traffic solution’?
- 40 Ekrem: it will be a big solution
- 41 Ece: yeah..ok.example’..after ‘for example’ you need to?..write a sentence..(reading line 13) ‘stricter penalties’..and as you see this is Turkish.radar’
- 42 Ekrem: Turkish..it’s also English
- 43 Ece: and English as well? ‘stricter penalties’ (reading line 14)
- 44 Ekrem: radar
- 45 Ece: what?. yes. can you complete the sentence?
- 46 Ekrem: just radar
- 47 Ece: no you but this is not a sentence
- 48 Ekrem: ah..I know..I just omit ‘for example’ and instead of ‘for example’ I use ‘such as...stricter penalties’ and instead of ‘amount’ ‘  
..number of traffic police should be increased’
- 49 Ece: mm.by the way this is ok I guess I first thought “the number of er traffic police’.. ‘the amount of traffic police’ is ok but...’stricter penalties ...should be introduced’..sounds better...yes..erm.ok..(reading line 16) ‘to sum up drivers must be careful’...? (Eliciting the correct preposition)
- 50 Ekrem: ‘to the rules’
- 51 Ece: ‘with the rules’.or. ‘about’. about the rules’..not ‘to’
- 52 Ekrem: can’t I use ‘to’?
- 53 Ece: uhuh ..mm.(reading line 17) ‘unless they are tired and feel better own self’ own self’?.....there’s nothing like that.ok..change it..  
erm.instead of ‘unless’ here when..
- 54 Ekrem: when
- 55 Ece: they shouldn’t go on roads when they are
- 56 Ekrem: I just turned ‘they had better’..not go on roads
- 57 Ece: unless they are tired when but when you use ‘when’ it’s better ‘accidents can be..?
- 58 Ekrem: ‘avoidable’

- 59 Ece: instead of that 'can't be....?'  
 60 Ekrem: I don't know.. I have no idea.. I just  
 61 Ece: avoid..so can't be  
 62 Ekrem: 'avoidable' is a verb?  
 63 Ece: avoid is a verb.avoid'  
 64 Ekrem: avoidable adj..  
 65 Ece: avoidable  
 66 Ekrem: is adjective  
 67 Ece: I don't think we can use such an adjective here.avoidable'.can't be avoided'..you should use passive..avoided. (reading lines 18-19) 'on condition that drivers drive their er cars without paying attention'  
 68 Ekrem: 'without paying attention'..there is a verb ...to replace this..without paying attention..just one adverb  
 69 Ekrem: just one adverb.carelessly'?  
 70 Ece: 'carelessly' of course.. 'carelessly' (Ece laughs).. carelessly.but you need to think about (reading line 18) 'on condition that'.. after this..there must be something positive..  
 71 Ekrem: mmm  
 72 Ece: can't be avoided  
 73 Ekrem: I just used it instead of 'if'  
 74 Ece: mm..no  
 75 Ekrem: to//  
 76 Ece: //this is ok..or?.. as long as  
 77 Ekrem: as long as  
 78 Ece: 'on condition that'.we can't use it here..or 'accidents erm can be avoided on condition that drivers...drive carefully..or 'as long as they drive carefully'...so you need to change the wording if you want to use this ...before I forget we..erm I was going to ask where your thesis statement is  
 79 Ekrem: thesis statement..erm I didn't put it  
 80 Ece: ok..so include a thesis statement..but that's ok..very good..thank you.

**Seda conferencing with Fatih: April 1st 2008. 15 minutes 45 seconds. (Deleted).**

**Seda conferencing with Sevdar: April 3rd, 2008. 16 minutes. (Deleted).**

## **Appendix L**

### **Letter to the AR team. November 10th, 2008**

Dear Ece and Seda,

Thank you for participating in our research until now. I know it takes up your valuable time and I am of course very grateful. To summarise what we have done thus far:1. We analysed transcripts of the stage one conferences carried out by Seda, Nihat and Ömer and identified features that were desirable for future conferencing with students. 2. We studied the list of points prior to our next (stage two) conferencing. 3. The three of us carried out two conferences each and worked together on putting together transcripts. 4.We recently identified clear stages of one of the transcripts. We'll look at the others later.5.

The next stage is for us to work firstly individually and then meet to see how far we were able to implement desirable conferencing features when we carried out the stage two conferences. As you will see from the attached sheet, I have copied the transcript, but 'broken up' into several agreed sections for ease of reference. I have also copied a list of the points we noted from stage one conference transcripts. Could you please, as far as possible, read each section and at the same time refer to the list of points. What do you notice? Please feel free to write comments on the transcript. I would be very interested in your thoughts on how our teacher knowledge of conferencing based on the points listed is reflected in our stage two conferencing. What we discover will be evidence of our continued teacher-development. If you have any problems or suggestions on how to do the above then please contact me. Thanks again!

**Appendix M Student permission form**

I understand that, by agreeing to participate in this study, I also agree to my full name appearing in the final document describing the study, which may be read by anyone. Signed: .....



